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The Patmos vision.

THE PATMOS VISION

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY

GEORGE W. DAVIS

2369

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THE PATMOS VISION

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The last book in the New Testament is properly designated, "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ.**"

Many expositions of the visions vouchsafed to John, the beloved apostle, on Patmos, are being published. There are a number of works of merit on this timely theme—a theme destined to claim attention more and more as we draw near the time ordained of God for its complete fulfillment.

It is asserted with confidence that the entire contents of the Apocalypse from the fourth chapter to the conclusion (Chap. 22:5), are still "**the things which shall be hereafter.**"

Time, we are most hopeful, will prove the Futurist view to be the correct one.

The writer hesitated long and after yielding to persuasion and also a conviction believed to be from the Holy Spirit, enters once more the field of prophetic investigation,—not as a competitor but rather a helper of those not blest with helps on eschatology.

The aim has been to offer a treatise of less proportions than ordinarily is at command, and to present it as simply as possible for the sake of many who have not time to read a more extensive or elaborate work.

It has been a difficult task; first, to compass the vast subject within the limits of 300 pages; second, to simplify the most profound piece of literature ever written, namely, the Apocalypse or the Revelation of God's completed purpose in Redemption.

The occasion for the writing of this book is the demand of many advance subscribers, whose cordial request to submit in convenient form, a series of addresses delivered from time to time, covering a period of six months, is herewith granted.

It is to be hoped the reader will receive and peruse these comments in the same spirit with which they are sent forth. The theme—(Jesus the Coming One)—is so dear to the heart, it is desired that all men may know “the fellowship of this mystery”—“**Christ in you the hope of glory.**”

There is no consciousness of a contentious spirit in setting forth arguments in support of certain propositions. The author entertains the highest respect for the opinions of those who may find reason to differ from him.

Details possibly can never be fully adjusted until what we know in part “shall be done away.” At best we only “prophesy in part,” although there is no assumption of prophetic gift in the wider meaning of the term as relates to foretelling future events.

Trusting God’s gracious Spirit may overcome all the imperfections and that He may bless the Word of Truth it contains to His own glory, this book is committed to God’s saints, and all whose privilege it is to become such, with longing desire that all shall see the face of the King in His beauty before judgment overtakes the world.

GEO. W. DAVIS.

FOREWORD

It is likely that the Book of Revelation is being studied today ten times more than at any time before. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the Book, is stirring up a great multitude, not only to search this Book, but also to write comments or expositions of it. The writer of this book, "The Patmos Vision," Rev. Geo. W. Davis, is one whom the Spirit has moved to make this contribution to the literature pertaining to our Lord's Second Coming and kindred themes.

Most of the early writers of the Church Age understood this Book of Revelation to be a prophetic description of Christ's return and of the Judgment Day on the nations, and that it would be literally fulfilled. During the dark ages, this Book was regarded only as types and symbols of history; but more and more in recent years, the spiritual-minded students of this Book have returned to the opinions of the Apostolic Church, that this prophetic Scripture will have a literal fulfillment.

The writer of this volume has given solid food for the thoughtful believer, and the book should be read slowly and prayerfully to grasp the full meaning. Many sidelights on the subject will be found by hunting up the various proof texts which the author has referred to.

It looks as if we are on the verge of the accomplishment of this last and crowning Book of the Bible, and we pray that these "Visions from Patmos" may help many to understand and get ready for the coming of Jesus.

GEO. D. WATSON, D. D.

INTRODUCTION

It has been assumed by most Christians, and by many ministers, that the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ was not intended to be understood by the church, and that in place of its being a revelation, it is an obscuration.

Perhaps no book of the Bible has suffered so much from both its friends and its enemies as this book. It is a pleasure, therefore, to commend the earnest seeker after truth to this contribution to the literature of this much-discussed portion of Scripture.

Mr. Davis has succeeded in giving to us a simplified, practical and spiritual view of the purpose of God concerning the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God, during the age which confronts us. While there may be details in which there will be occasion to differ from Mr. Davis, the reader will find here a readable and understandable interpretation of the glorious truths which our Lord gave to the Patmos seer. No one can read this book, with real desire for a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, without a new consciousness of the "depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" and a new inspiration for a holier life and for greater devotion "unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

We could earnestly desire that every member of the Body of Christ might have the joyful privilege of meditating upon the truths which are here so clearly and forcefully presented. If the perusal of these pages results in a more prayerful reading of the Revelation, truly the promise blessed is he that readeth, and blessed are those who listen to the words of this prophecy, and lay to heart what is written in it,—will be verified.

REV. T. C. HORTON,

Superintendent Los Angeles Bible Institute.

CHAPTER 1

THE PATMOS VISION

Containing as an Introduction, a View, a Review, and a Preview, of the Field of Redemption, through the Lens of Prophecy. The Focal Point, the Coming of the Lord. (Rev. 1:19.)

The Bible is a unique and incomparable book. It is entitled, above all others, to be called "The Book." It bears the distinction of being the record of **history** and **prophecy**, combined. Its history is true; history sustains the veracity of sacred history. Bible **prophecy** is unimpeachable. Prophecy is capable of demonstration. History is that demonstration, for all sacred prophecy eventually merges into history. Scripture prophecy, hence, becomes its own authentic witness.

The Bible, in an all inclusive sense can truly be said to be **prophetic**, for its **prophecies** in volumes, are written on the records of nations, as now, **secular history**. What is still more remarkable is that **Bible history** is prophetic.

No wonder myriads of earth's greatest minds acknowledge the sixty-six canonical books, and recognize them in their unity and entirety, as the **Revelation of God**. From Genesis to Revelation, we have a transcript of the revealed Word and Will of God. The whole is progressive unfoldings of the counsels of God, conceived in eternity, born in time, and to be matured in the Eternal state to come.

One master idea permeates the scope of Inspiration; one thread of scarlet binds the volume into order and unity; one person towers grandly high on its prophetic perspective—Jesus, "the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world"; Jesus, "the Lamb led to the slaughter"; Jesus, "the Lamb found worthy to open the book."

(1)

Four keywords will unlock the treasures of Prophecy—Purpose, Promise, Passion, Power.

(1) Christ, the Purpose of God, the incentive to creation.

(2) Christ, the Promise of God to fallen creation.

(3) The Passion of Christ, the ransom of creation.

(4) The Power of Christ, the renewer of creation.

The Bible, therefore, is **Christ**, "Which is, and which was and which is to come" (Rev. 1:8). All Truth can be compressed into a much narrower compass, even one word, **Redemption**.

The Scope of All Prophetic Vision.

The Word of God is not a visionary Book, but it is a Book of Visions. Moses and John clasp hands across the space of 16 centuries, completing the full testimony of God, establishing the unity of the Scriptures, and conclusively confirming the vision is **one**, and that it is of the Lord.

1. **Redemption a necessity and a Promise.**

Moses describes the first act, in which earth is the theatre and Eden the scenic setting. God, man and Satan are the leading characters on the stage of action. Sin, judgment and death are enacted on the one side; mercy, love and grace on the other. Light and darkness co-mingle; judgment is mitigated by mercy, and in the dim shadows, hope and faith discern the promised day star, Jesus the seed of the Woman, destined to bruise the serpent's head. In pain and shame, man is excluded from Paradise. The way of access to the Tree of Life is barred; a flaming sentinel with drawn sword keeps guard, until that sword is crossed and man is restored to union with God, and shares the uttermost glory of God displayed by the Cherubim. This closes the first act.

2. **A Redeemer found and a Ransom provided.**

The second act reveals scenes of new interest. The Saviour of mankind is typically portrayed in sacri-

ficial substitution. Poets sing of Redemption and Prophets proclaim His coming. Heaven's orchestra swell the anthem of Peace and Good-will to men. Sin, death and judgment direct their hideous power against the Redeemer. The tragic death of the Cross seems a final triumph for Satan and fallen man. Darkness reigns. But light breaks in the last lingering moment. The dying Saviour proclaims the victory. "It is finished." The light in glorious radiance breaks on Easter Morn.

Sin is judged, and death meets his conqueror. The heavens open and receive the triumphant God-Man. Heavenly messengers promise His return; "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). This gospel of grace is being preached and multitudes have believed on Him, "Who was, and is, and is to come." But sin reigns and Satan is still the god of this world. Darkness deepens for it is night. "Fair as the moon," the Church is the only light amid the surrounding gloom. Watchmen are gazing upward to catch the Morning Star's first rising gleams. This closes the second act. Once prophecy, it is now history.

The Contents of the Apocalyptic Vision.

3. The Redeemer Returns and Redemption Enforced.

The third and last act, consummating in a ransomed race, and a redeemed earth, is portrayed in a series of panoramic scenes. Such constitutes the vision of John the Revelator, and is the subject matter of the book of Revelation.

The veil is lifted; the future flits by in dissolving views; rapidly the perspective changes, and intense are the scenic displays. The forces of good and evil, angelic and Satanic, Divine and human are struggling in fiercest battle. Through several awful years the victory and defeat alternate. Three worlds strive for mastery on this earth as the seat of conflict. We

watch the changing scenes with awe, sorrow or delight, according as they are displayed in heaven, on earth or under the earth. The songs of the victors alternate with the cries of the martyrs; the shouts of overcomers mingle with the wails of the vanquished. Death rides forth majestically to be finally destroyed. Sin's sway gives way to righteousness enthroned; Satan's brief time of madness is followed by age-long gladness, yea, the ransomed shall return to Zion with age-long gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The Prince of this age is superseded by the "Prince of the kings of the earth," "the Prince of Peace."

The Millennial Kingdom is ushered in; the White Throne of Judgment follows, and the eternal state is established. Thus all is accounted for; sin's conception, told by Moses, finds its doom, as foretold by John. The old creation passes into the new. The first man, fallen and death-sentenced, is exalted and immortalized. The first marriage and its tragedy are superseded by the nuptials of the Lamb and His Bride. The Tree of Life is barred in Eden, but accessible in the New Paradise of God. The sword intercepting the way to the Tree of Life has been crossed by the God-Man. The future keeping of the Tree of Life is in the power of the living creatures redeemed from earth.

What a scene of glorious antitheses the new presents in contrast with the old. Pain and shame and death are passed away; no more curse, sighing nor crying—all is blessing, praising, rejoicing.

The whole Bible is prophetic. We await in hope, and with anticipative joy, the realization of those scenes, as yet future, unveiled by John in the final series of coming events.

Redemption in **conception** and **development** is prophetic in character as truly in the Old Testament, as is the Apocalypse in the present, prophetic of the **consummation** of Redemption. The first coming of Christ is most accurately foretold in fullest detail, hundreds

of years in advance of the **Incarnation**. This is history now, but once it was prophecy. Every prediction intimating His first appearing on earth contains assurance of a subsequent return. Isaiah speaks of the "man of sorrows" and announces of the same person, "Behold a King shall reign."

The Lamp of Prophetic Vision.

Is it extinguished? All believers in Inspiration study the prophecies concerning Christ's coming to put away sin; why do we shrink, falter and question the intelligibility, assurance and accuracy of that particular portion of God's Word revealing the future aspects of Redemption? Has the Lamp failed?

Contrast the skeptical attitude of the chief priests and rulers in the days of Christ's humiliation with the spiritually-minded students of prophecy, like Simeon, who joyfully realized the fulfillment of his life's hope, as he gazed upon the face of the infant Jesus. There are today, some, who have the light to interpret prophecy. The "Seven Spirits before the Throne," unfolding the vision to John, is the Holy Spirit, promised to show all believers who diligently inquire and walk in fellowship with God.

The Vision Opened to Jesus Christ

The introductory words in chapter one are, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God granted Him, that He might make known to His servants, certain events, which must shortly come to pass."

John, the beloved disciple, is not the author of this book. He was the amanuensis. It is not John's Revelation, but the **Revelation of Jesus Christ**.

The **sacredness** of this last book, at once becomes established. Do we value a message from our departed dead? Christ is the only real and authentic messenger who has ever spoken from within the veil of the unseen. Do we prize the secret counsels of the Father and the Son? The Church, the Royal Family, is initiated into the secrets hidden from even the

prophets of old. Do we love truth and want to know the best and the worst? Hearken to the heart messages of Jesus, the "Faithful Witness," as recorded in the book of Eschatology. Do you covet the blessing of your God? Read reverently; search diligently and "lay to heart" what thou readest.

- ⑥ 1. "Blessed is He who reads" (Chap. 1:3 W).

David said: "The law of Thy mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver. I have more understanding than my teachers, for Thy **testimonies are my meditation**. I understand more than the Ancients, because I keep Thy precepts."

Revelation discloses the wisdom and the love of God in the solution of every economic question; in the establishment of universal peace; in the conquest of every foe of the race; yea, in the elimination of the cause of all pain, poverty and pollution, namely, **Sin and Satan**. Statesmen can learn what the "distress of nations" means; churchmen can discover the ultimate goal of the church; laymen can gain the light and guidance so sorely needed in the times grievous wolves are scattering the flock.

- X 2. "Blessed are those who listen to the words of the prophecy of this book and lay them to heart" (Chap. 1:3 W). The Book is "twice blessed." The second exceeds the first. The comfort and consolation of the promises contained, yield to the embrace of the believing heart. The rewards described become prizes to be apprehended, and present inspiration in the heavenly race.

The fear of prophetic aspects frequently deprives of the devotional assets. Revelation abounds in precepts and promises. It is valuable as a compendium of doctrine and is a symposium of delightful things. It is most worshipful in spirit, and lifts the devout soul to exalted heights, where it must join in overflowing praise the oratorio of the skies,

“To Him Who is seated on the throne,
And to the Lamb,
Be ascribed all blessing and honor,
And glory and might
Until the ages of the ages.”

Communication of the Vision.

God's channels of communication to man have always been chosen vessels. A sensitized spirit is required to catch the vision. Elisha's request for a double portion of Elijah's Spirit, was conditioned upon his spiritual discernment. From the lowlands of material environment, few souls ascend transfiguration heights and behold the glory of the only begotten Son of God. He who would witness the land of far distances and “behold the king in His beauty,” must wait. The vision tarries for him who waits.

God's medium of revelation has ever been shut out from men; shut in with God. Moses, spending forty years in the desert and forty days in the mount; Elijah's year beside the drying brook of Cherith; Jeremiah in the dungeon; Daniel's captivity and retirement; John Bunyan in Bedford jail, are examples of the training of the prophets of God. John was no exception; “I, John, your brother and a sharer with you in the sorrows and kingship and patience of Jesus, found myself in the island of Patmos, on account of the Word of God and the truth told us by Jesus” (Chap. 1:9).

Patmos is a lonely isle in the Aegean Sea, some thirty miles in circumference. It is rocky and desolate. On account of its dreary character, Domitian used it as a place of confinement for prisoners. There, John was banished and heaven opened unto him, unfolding a series of visions, which embodied as a whole, constitutes one vision, called “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Thank God for the bleak places in life that bring heaven near.

Many parts of these visions are presented in symbols, but the entire book must not be regarded as enig-

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matical. It seems a safe rule to interpret all symbols so designated, by the Scripture. The Bible is its own best commentary. Where there is absence of symbolic character, interpret literally.

Carefully comparing the introduction with the conclusion, we are compelled to admit there is before us

An Open Vision.

"The Revelation given by Jesus Christ, which God granted Him, that He might **make known to His servants** certain events, which must shortly come to pass (Chap. 1:1). "**Make no secret,**" he added, "of the meaning of the predictions contained in this book" (Chap. 22:10).

Now, note the **contrast** of the conclusion of Daniel's prophecies. "Thou, O Daniel, **shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end**" (Dan. 12:4). "Seal the book"—"Seal not the word." There is one conclusion to be reached, namely, that a future time would arrive, when Daniel's vision would unfold and be unfolded by a subsequent series of visions at the "time of the end." Revelation is designated as dealing with this very time—for we are informed "the time of their fulfillment is close at hand."

Daniel is the key to Revelation: Revelation is the key to Daniel. Both are complete together; divided, they are incomprehensible. For this reason, the **Futurist's** interpretation is acceptable and satisfactory. The Futurist places all the contents of Revelation from chapter four to the end of the book as awaiting future fulfillment, and from chapter two to four as both present and future at the time the vision was recorded by John.

It would be an extravagant claim to assume that the visions before us are to be discerned with perfect accuracy in every detail. The gradually increasing light will develop the detail as prophecy merges into history. But we do claim the key to the Book is at command. Patient, prayerful application reveals hidden treasure. We search for gold **because the deeper**

veins are richest. We abandon not the search, simply because gold lies deep; gold is valuable, even if we do not find it all.

Jesus said, "When the Spirit of Truth is come . . . He will show you things to come." Seven times we are commanded, "Let all who have ears give heed to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." Regard not as impracticable and unprofitable; fear not as unintelligible and unreliable this last message of the **Triune** God through Jesus, Our Lord.

God's Monogram Attests the Vision.


Three is the Divine number. Three is God's signature. "John sends greetings to the seven churches in the province of Asia. May grace be granted to you, and peace, from Him who is and was and evermore will be; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ, the truthful Witness, the first of the dead to be born to Life, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth" (Chap. 1:4-5 W).

1. The Father, or self-existing, eternal "I am."
2. The Holy Spirit, or the seven Spirits before the Throne."
3. The Lord Jesus, or the "Faithful Witness."

Prophecy finds its **purpose** in the counsels of God, the Father; its **operations** through the Holy Ghost, and its **fulfillment** in Jesus: "and this is in harmony with **God's merciful purpose**, for the government of the world, when the times are ripe for it—the **purpose** which He has cherished in His own mind of **restoring the whole creation, to find its one head in Christ**; yea, things in heaven, and things on earth, to find one Head in Him." (Eph. 1:9-10 W.)

The Trinity salutes the church and seals the message, according to a purpose in God, ever working by the Holy Ghost, to be consummated in Jesus Christ.

Jesus officially signs with the authority of His three-fold office—offices appointed by virtue of His Redemptive task.

- 
1. Prophet, "The Faithful or Truthful Witness."
 2. Priest, "The First-born of the dead."
 3. King, "The Prince of the Kings of the Earth."

"**The Faithful Witness**" recalls the earthly life of our Lord from the manger to the cross. The foundation of prophetic fulfillment of Redemption is the atoning blood. "It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood, that we have deliverance" (Eph. 1:7 W).

The church recognizes this with adoring praise. Harken to the representative response to the salutation made to the churches, "To Him who loves us and freed us from our sins with His own blood, and has formed us into a kingdom, to be priests to God the Father, to Him be ascribed the glory and the power until the ages of the ages" (Chap. 1:6 W).

It is interesting to note the three references to the blood of Christ in the subsequent portion of Revelation. The entire work of Redemption in its past, present and future accomplishment is celebrated.

(a) "Have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).

(b) "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb" (12:11).

(c) "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (5:9).

Three references in the wholly body of the book! There is one in the **introduction**, and one in the **conclusion**, making five in all. This is victory complete; over sin, Satan and death.

"**The First-born of the dead.**" This title designates the ascended life of Christ. His Priesthood is represented. It claims **pre-eminence**, as well as **priority**, over the ranks of all who shall follow Him from mortality into immortality, be they living or dead, at the time of His appearing to raise the sleeping ones and change the living ones into His own likeness. "He was raised for our Justification." He now mediates the cause of His redeemed ones. Thus, we behold the application of Redemption is being effected through

the Holy Spirit, given in answer to Christ's intercession and session in glory. The present work of Redemption is making us "priests unto God," yea, "a kingdom of Priests."

"The Prince of the Kings of the Earth." This is Jesus' prophetic title. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" He is, but His Sovereignty is held in abeyance, until the Father "shall make all enemies His footstool." When He shall rise from the judgment throne, and majestically ride forth, the Redemption of the earth and the nations will be brought to completion. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," awaiting their Redemption. When once earth is placed on a redemption basis, as will be shown in Chapter 5, the blood-bought ones will sing, "Thou hast made us . . . kings unto our God and we shall reign over the earth" (Chap. 5:10). This is the future accomplishment of Redemption.

In this light, we can better understand the Triune salutation in verse 4, and a practical repetition in verse 8; the former from the Father and the latter from the Son. This is the salutation: "From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

God the Father, Christ the Son, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, are seen co-working, in three successive dispensations. The Father in the Old, the Spirit in the Present or Church age, and the Son in the New, soon to dawn. Yet each have been present, and are, and will be. The Sovereignty belonged to the Father in the first, belongs to the Holy Spirit in the second and will belong to the Lord Jesus Christ in the third. We refer to sovereignty as to the plan and execution of Redemption.

The threefold office of Jesus sets forth His official relation as Captain of our salvation; the time of His official ministries, the tenses of our salvation. This **triple monogram or trifolium** gospel is everywhere present in Holy Writ. The following is suggestive:

PAST—Heb. 9:26.

Jesus **was**: He **appeared** on earth to put away sin. He was the Good Shepherd. He gave His life a ransom price. We were saved from our guilt, by the blood of His cross. Faith looks back and clings.

PRESENT—Heb. 9:24.

Jesus **is**: He **appears** in the presence of God for us. He is the Great Shepherd. By his mediation we are being saved from the power of sin by the Spirit of Christ. Love looks up, and binds us to Him.

FUTURE—Heb. 9:28.

Jesus **evermore will be**; He **shall appear**. He will be the Chief Shepherd. He will come unto Salvation, from future wrath and tribulation. Hope reaches onward, the expectation of glory.

Jesus, Prophet, Priest and King, Saviour, Sanctifier, Glorifier! Blessed be His Name! Thank God He has delivered us, He does deliver us and we trust He shall deliver us.

The Focal Point of View.

“Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also who have pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him” (Chap. 1:7).

These words suggest the ultimate goal of all prophecy, and constitute the very hub around which the Apocalyptic visions revolve. At the very portals is written, “Behold, He cometh.” Within the sacred precincts of the messages to the churches, Christ announces, “Behold, I come quickly, hold fast . . .” (Chap. 3:11). As the door of prophetic vision swings shut, the last words we hear are, “Behold, I come quickly.” What does this oft repeated proclamation mean? Do not these words confirm the testimony of Daniel (7:13), “I saw in the night visions and be-

hold, one like the Son of man came **with the** clouds of heaven," and also with the Lord's declaration concerning Himself: "They shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"? (Matt. 24:30).

Most certainly the **Epiphany** of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the event to which reference is made.

But the coming of the Lord is accomplished in two acts; the first alludes to His coming in the air for His saints; the second, His descent to the earth, to be revealed to all. The translation of the church follows His appearing in the air; the establishment of the kingdom is contingent upon His advent to earth.

The saints **meet Christ in the clouds** (I Thess. 4:17).

Christ meets the nations, as He cometh **with** clouds (Chap. 1:7).

Clouds are symbols of His majesty (Ps. 18:89).

He cometh **with** clouds, **on** clouds (Matt. 24:30), **in** clouds (Mark 13:26).

"On clouds"—His Throne.

"In clouds"—The saints ascend.

"With clouds"—Christ and the saints descend.

"Every eye shall see Him," but not all at the same moment necessarily. As we have noted above, there is a gathering out of the "first fruits unto God and the Lamb," before He is manifested in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon all that know not God. Specific reference is made to Israel—"Also, they that have pierced Him."

The general consternation of the nations is foreseen in the striking statement, "and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." Evidently the world will be sadly unprepared for the solemn inspection of the "Prince of the Kings of the Earth."

The Spirit's response is a double affirmative, "Even So. Amen." Quite different is and will be the attitude of the church, as the **Bridegroom** comes. Her prayer is the Spirit's **Amen**. Her reply is "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

CHAPTER II.

A VISION OF CHRIST

In Which is Revealed the Face of Jesus the Glorified Christ; the Grace of the Everliving High Priest; and the Place of Judicial Administration, in the Midst of the Churches.

One has written of solitude:

“Oh solitude, where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?

There is mercy in every place;
There is mercy-encouraging thought
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.”

The solitude of John the Beloved found for him the face of the risen Lord; the isolation of Patmos brought to him the gracious presence of the Son of God.

Sometimes surprise awaits the weary pilgrim of the night. As Gethsemane summoned its own angel of comfort; as the fiery furnace revealed the face and form of the Son of God; so faith still hears in the darkness the rustle of angelic wings, and is assured, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for **Thou art with me.**”

Near the side of every bitter fountain grows the branch of healing. No night so dark that calls not forth its starry beacon.

Lonely Patmos becomes the gate of heaven.

The Nature of the Vision.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day”(1:10). John was in the Spirit. All true believers are “in Christ.” Once we were all accounted as “in Adam.” All Christians are “in the Spirit” who walk not after the flesh. Once we were all “in the flesh.” “Ye are not in the

flesh, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9). So is compared the Christian's past condition with his present standing. But the phrase "in the Spirit" suggests a different usage here. Literally, it should be rendered, "became in the Spirit." At a glance, we recognize John had not lost his position "in Christ" and was normally, therefore, "in the Spirit." It was for his faith and testimony, he had been banished. A spiritual ecstasy or trance-like condition is implied. His own spirit was projected into the higher realm of the Spirit. His spirit was transported as Paul's, with this difference: John understood his experience and speaks confidently. Paul describing the vision as recorded in 2 Cor. (12:2) said: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in **the body**, I cannot tell; or whether **out of the body**, I cannot tell, God knoweth."

There is another point of contrast: John was commissioned to reveal the essence of his vision by presenting it in a series of messages to the churches of Asia. Paul was held under Divine restraint; having heard "unspeakable things which no human being is permitted to repeat" (2 Cor. 12:4 W).

The Time of the Vision.

"On the Lord's Day" (1:10). The significance of "the Lord's Day" is a debatable question, some affirming the title as designating the first day of the week; others endeavoring to make it synonymous with another term, namely, "The Day of the Lord."

We strongly incline to the first view. The following reasons are suggested:

1. The expression—"the Day of the Lord"—occurs three times in the New Testament. (Acts 2:20, 1 Thes. 5:2 and 2 Peter 3:10.) There seems to be no reason to change the form in this particular.

2. The expression—"the Lord's Day"—is different in the original from "the Day of the Lord." The word "Lord's," is an adjective, while in the term, "the day of the Lord," "Lord" is a noun.

3. The use of the adjective form can be found in one other place (1 Cor. 11:20), "The Lord's Supper." Comparing, we have this result: "The Lord's Supper" is the memorial of His suffering and death. "The Lord's Day" is the memorial of His Resurrection.

4. By "the Day of the Lord," is implied the time in which He will judge the world. "The Day of the Lord" follows Christ's judicial work in the midst of the churches. This is an important point for which we contend. If John was "in Spirit" carried into "the Day of the Lord," the vision of Christ in "the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" would form a necessary phase of said coming Judgment. If John was transported on "the Lord's Day," then it was on the **first day of the week** he saw Christ's **present** ministry in the church, and subsequently His future judgment upon the world.

The point of view has everything to do with an intelligible understanding of the book of Revelation. Is it history or is it prophecy? Or what part of it is a record of the past and how much is in future store? The "**historist**" finds it about all completed; the **prae-torist**" applies much of it to the present; the "**futurist**" places the entire contents, from chapter four to the close of the book, in the near future.

The "historist" contends that we are living somewhere in the days of the seals. Under just which seal, they dispute among themselves. Some assume the first—the White Horse—and find in the progress of the **gospel** its fulfillment, forgetting **seals** are **judgment symbols**. The gospel is **grace**, not judgment.

Others affirm the second seal is open—the Red Horse (War)—forgetting at that time there will be **universal war**.

Others teach that we are in the days of the **sixth** seal, ignoring the presence of the glorified church, which must be with her Lord, before **any seals are opened**.

Others place us in the climacteric days of the seventh seal—yea, within the very blast of the seventh trumpet, and assure us Armageddon is being waged in Belgium, Russia, France and Germany.

Are they ignorant of the fact, of the place, time, forces and results of Armageddon, which is to be fought in **Palestine**, seven years after the Jews return to their land, and that it is a contest of the world against Israel?

All this and much more that is confusing and perplexing is simplified, if we get the proper viewpoint.

Please observe the natural divisions of the book, as dictated by the Holy Spirit in verse 19:

1. **"The Things thou hast seen"** (Chapter 1).
2. **"The things that are"** (Chapters 2-3).
3. **"The things that shall be hereafter"** (Chapters 4-22).

The vision contained in the first three chapters presents **Christ as the Judicial Administrator in the midst of the churches**. The vision recorded in the third chapter and on, reveals **Christ as the Judicial Administrator of the world in the midst of the Throne**. These two scenes are not co-temporaneous. The issues of the one **precede** the decrees of the other. The judgment of the church in a complete sense is finished before the judgment of the world begins.

Judgment begins at the house of God. (1 Pet. 4:17.) The judgment of the world is subsequent. "Know ye not the saints shall judge the world? How can the judgment of the world be conducted **simultaneously** with the judgment of the church? How can the church sit in judgment until her judgment is accomplished?"

The judgment of the seals, and the after series of vials and trumpets beyond all reason for controversy, follow the setting of the judgment seat of Christ. Is the heavenly court in session? Have we "all appeared before the judgment seat of Christ"? Nay, verily. Then **"the Day of the Lord"** is not begun.

The judgment of the church is threefold, corresponding to the threefold office of Christ and the three aspects of Redemption.

Christians were judged. Past sins are condemned and legal satisfaction rendered, by the death of Christ, on the cross. "Verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My words and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation" (Krisis judgment. Gr.). (John 5:24.) As sinners, believers were judged.

Christians are being judged. Present failure receives chastening of the Lord. He stands in the midst of the churches to discipline and encourage. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31). "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent" (Rev. 3:19). As saints, believers are being judged.

Christians will be judged. Further examination and fire testing await the worker in Christ's service, before the judgment seat of Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10). As servants, believers will be judged.

Christ is seen in the discharge of His second official prerogative in the vision before us. He is now judging the church as to earthly walk and saintliness of character. Love mingles and grace co-mingles in the exercise of judicial action.

Christ is coming again. He will reject the lukewarm and faithless professors, who heed not His judicial warnings. He will gather the faithful and vigilant who hearken, to meet him in the air. (1 Thess. 4:16.) The judgment for stewardship follows, and the believer's place and sphere in the coming kingdom is established.

Thus His Royal Government is prepared; His coheirs of the kingdom appointed; His portfolio arranged. **Then, and only then, will He appear in the midst of the Jasper throne, which will be the adminis-**

trative center from which will go forth the decrees of world judgment from Christ and His co-administrative church.

As long as the glorified Christ is in the midst of the churches (seven candlesticks), He is the Royal Priest concerned for and with His redeemed on earth. When He appears in the midst of the throne, He assumes kingly authority and opens judgment session—**this is “the Day of the Lord.”**

We, therefore, conclude that the first vision embraces the entire earthly history of the church until “caught up into glory” and that the vision of the throne inaugurates the judgment times subsequent to the Rapture. A careful comparison will truly support this interpretation.

Christ in the Midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks.

(Chaps. 1-4).

Corrective judgment of the church.

The church on earth.

Christ admonishing the church.

The church on probation.

Christ the High Priest.

A sanctuary scene.

An ecclesiastical relation.

Christ in the Midst of the Throne. (Chaps. 4-5)

Retributive judgment on the world.

The Redeemed church in glory.

The church rewarded.

The church enthroned.

Christ Proclaimed King.

A judicial setting.

A political demonstration.

We conclude from the foregoing facts, the two scenes present the economy of grace, and the economy of judgment, respectively.

The Setting of the Vision.

“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks (Lampstands, W)” (1:12).

This is a sanctuary scene. It is not the Tabernacle of earth, nor the true Tabernacle Moses beheld as the pattern for the earthly habitation of God erected in the wilderness. There is no altar, no table of shewbread, no brazen sea, and no altar of incense. Even the seven golden candlesticks, typical of Israel as the communicator of Divine light, have disappeared, and instead, seven golden lampstands comprise the entire furnishing. One bowl contributed the oil to the seven branches of the ancient candelabrum. In its place stands Jesus the risen Lord, the sole supply of oil to furnish the light.

This arrangement is new. It belongs exclusively to the church age. After the setting of the Jasper Throne, we shall witness **two candlesticks**—a future change, when Israel comes within the enfoldings of grace once more. (11:5.)

The testimony of this age is Christ. “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me.” Hence, we see **seven distinct lamps**, not seven candlesticks, uniting in one bowl. The bond of unity is Christ. The seven lamps are:

The Seven Churches.

The Seven Churches are representative.

They draw the supply of oil (the Holy Spirit) from Him.

They are watched by Christ to see if they burn brightly.

They are burning in the night; this age is dark.

The Church complete is the only light of God on earth.

Blessed truth, Jesus in the midst. As Aaron in the former sanctuary dressed the lamps, and lighted them at even, so our gracious High Priest has prepared, and is providing the oil for the lamps in the Church Sanctu-

ary, and through the long night of this dispensation is watching to see how dimly or how brightly they shine. As Aaron snuffed the wicks with the golden snuffers, Jesus, with wisdom Divine, discerns and displaces the things that obscure our light.

What a privilege to shine for Him until the day dawns and the shadows flee away. "Arise, shine, for the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee."

If we, like the foolish virgins, find our "lamps burning low" or "going out," let us hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches: "I will come unto thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Chap. 2:5).

The Center of the Vision,

is the Lord Jesus, Himself. (Verse 13.) "I saw one like unto the Son of Man."

This is a title very dear to Jesus, and the saved ones; it sets forth His human kinship to the race. Great High Priest He is forever, and forever touched with a feeling for our infirmities. The Scripture furnishes us with **three portraits** of our Lord.

The Bride beholds Him as her **Glorified Kinsman**.

The Apostle John sees Him as the **Great High Priest**.

The World shall see Him, as John saw Him, **King of Kings**.

It is interesting and profitable to consider these in contrast.

1. Christ as revealed by the Holy Spirit to the prospective Bride. (S. S. 5:11-16.)

2. Christ as viewed by John judicially dealing with the church regarding her fidelity. (Rev. 1.)

3. Christ as manifested to the world, accompanied by His Bride. (Rev. 19:11-16.)

1. "His head is of most fine gold; His locks are bushy and black as a raven." The gold speaks of His Divine excellency; the black flowing locks of His

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youthfulness as accommodated to time; suggestive also, of His immortalized humanity. The Bride loves Christ as manifested in the flesh.

2. "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." This presents Christ as the Ancient of Days. As the Head of the church, He exercises a Divine prerogative; a High Priest **forever** after the order of Melchizedek, a Priesthood without ancestral beginning or ending—after "the power of an endless life."

3. "On His Head were many crowns." His future Royalty and all inclusive Kingliness are portrayed in this glorious Revelation.

Let not the **threefold nature of Redemption** escape notice in the three portraits. Comparing further, there are additional hints to **past, present and future** tenses of Salvation.

1. "His eyes are as dove's eyes." In grace, they are so tender, loving and gentle.

2. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." In church judgment, sharp and penetrating.

3. "His eyes were as a flame of fire." In world judgment, piercing and condemning.

The Words of Jesus: "His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh." **In grace,** He speaks words pure, comforting and gracious: "And all bare Him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." (Luke 4:22.)

"Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword." **In judicial relation,** His "word is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12.) **In world judgment,** "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He might smite the nations." "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies." (Ps. 45:5.)

Jesus Christ is the Word of God. **To the repenting and willing heart,** His words are full of grace and

truth. **To the compromising believer**, His words are discerning and dividing . . . piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. **To the world arrayed in rebellious warefare** at His coming, His word is the instrument of death.

The Feet of Jesus: "His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold." A vivid picture of His faithfulness and ability to uphold all who trust in Him.

"His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace." Suggestive of unyielding strength and firmness in judicial decision.

"He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God." The exercise of uncompromising Judgment against the foes of God.

The Countenance of Jesus: "His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as cedars." His whole aspect suggests glory and majesty. "The chief among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely."

"His countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength." Once His form was more "marred" than any man's; it is now illuminated with a glory no mortal may gaze upon. Resplendent and transcendent, He is the light of the world; to be revealed first as the Morning Star, for the Church, afterwards coming as the Sun of Righteousness, after the dark days of Tribulation.

The countenance is not described in the third portrait. Is it because of the flaming fire, in which Paul says, "He will come taking vengeance on all them that know not God"?

In the first description of the Beloved, we see the Christ of **Suffering and glory**. "My Beloved is **white and ruddy**" (S. S. 5:10). In the second, we behold Him, "crowned with glory and honor." In the third, we witness His coming "in power and great glory."

Christ possessed glory with the Father before the world was. Isaiah (Chap. 6:1-2) saw the Lord "on a throne—high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." Of this glory He emptied Himself. An

exiled King, He became, without a **throne**, without a **home**; having accomplished the Will of God on earth, He prayed for the recovery of the glory, temporarily laid aside. His prayer was heard. He is unveiled to the Church, reinvested with Divine Glory, and wearing an **additional glory**, won as Redeemer of the world.

A Vision of His Glory

What a pyramid of truth is builded in Hebrews (Chap. 2): Behold Christ, "crowned with glory and honor." This is **man's** original glory: **man as God made him**. Thou crownedst him with glory and honor" (Heb. 2:7). Next, we notice **man as sin has made him**: "We see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). Finally, **man as God remakes him**: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet" (Heb. 2:8).

Christ recovered man's lost dominion and wrested his lost crown from the dust. We do not see man's dominion restored, but we **do see Jesus crowned**, and are assured the Captain of our Salvation will eventually "bring many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10). He won by virtue of His death. "He tasted death for every man." Behold Him then in the midst of the churches, reflecting the eternal glory of the Father and radiating the glory of redeemed man.

2. **He holds the seven stars in His right hand.** (Verse 16). The stars are explained to be the angels or messengers of the seven churches (Verse 20) (Gr. Messenger). Christ's glory further consists in exercising Supreme Authority over all ministers and government, as exercised in the churches. "He is then to be the Head over all things to His church" (Eph. 1:22). It would have made ecclesiastical history widely different had Christ's Headship been recognized. As it is, both Papal Episcopacy and Laodicean Democracy, have supplanted our Sovereign Lord, the

Great Shepherd of the flock; and a gradual apostatizing is fast conforming Christendom to modern Babylonianism.

Stars are commissioned to shine. The fixedness of their light is determined by their relation to the Great Sun of Righteousness. In His hands, they are vigilant sentinels of the night. As the heavens are the work of God's fingers, Christ has fixed every spiritual luminary, and they are privileged to be upheld by His power.

Jude reminds us of "wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." These are ministers of God fallen from their estate. Flashing meteors—broken loose from their orbit—God pity them. They are the exponents of the **Bloodless theology** of "Cain;" the pursuers of prophetic orders for **gain**, like "Balaam;" the **treasonable** rebels against Divine Authority like "Core" (Korah) (Jude, 11-12). The modern teaching of these rebels is, "The God of my fathers is not my God."

A Glory Too Great for Mortal Vision

"I fell at His feet as dead" (Verse 17). John was overpowered and overwhelmed by the glorious vision. Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, too, were not able to endure the sight of Divine Glory until strengthened. How tenderly Jesus consoles. It is the voice of old, "Fear not."

A Vision of Comfort

"He laid His right hand upon me." Who having once felt the touch of Christ on body or in spirit can forget the life currents sweetly surging through the being? Can John forget the touch of Him, on whose bosom he once reclined? **Christ's voice and hand are ever reassuring.** Jesus is **unchanged.** His heart beats in sympathetic unison with the heart throbs of His saints. Circumstances may change mortals. Love is immortalized in Jesus.

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1. **"I am the First and the Last"**—Christ claims for himself a Divine title. This is proof sufficient against a modern heresy—"Jesus became divine by resurrection." He claims for Himself here what He asserted to Moses, **"I am Who Am."** In other words, if this title signifies anything, it does assume **self-existence**. **"In the beginning was the Word."** He is the first cause; He is the last effect. As the origin of all—He is the goal of all. **"To gather all things in Christ"** is the purpose of God that never falters.

It is characteristic of Jesus. Jesus first to **seek** the sinner: Jesus last to **forsake** the sinner. Jesus **first** in sorrow: Jesus **last** in sorrow. Our spiritual life begins in Jesus and eventually consummates in Him. We may lose all else, but the best is last—Jesus. What a termination of life—Jesus. What a goal of ages—Jesus. What interminable continuity of blissful being—**Jesus**.

2. The Living One. **"I am alive forevermore."** This verifies the former declaration—Jesus last—but not a Jesus circumscribed by time—"Alive forevermore," is the basis of eternal life.

3. **"I am He that liveth and was dead."** Christ's death was not a travesty on human credulity. It was no trance-like condition, nor a case of suspended animation. He really died. He is, therefore, Witness to a discharged claim. Death exacted the toll of the race from Him. Glorious testimony! Our sins are dead. Our old life is crucified with Him. Henceforth, **"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,"** for

**"Death could not keep His prey,
He tore the bars away,
Jesus, my Saviour."**

"And have the keys of hell and of death" (Verse 18).

Are Death and Hell **persons**? Or are they **places** personified? It seems likely the correct answer should be **"yes"** to both.

Hell is "Hades," in the Greek, corresponding to "sheol" in the Hebrew. It means in both languages, **the underworld, or abode of departed spirits.** While sometimes "sheol" is translated "grave," it is taking an unwarranted latitude in the use of the word. One example is all space permits. Jacob's pathetic lament, upon seeing the bloody coat of Joseph, was, "Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." * * * "I will go down into the grave (sheol) **unto my son** mourning." If "sheol" really means "grave," how could Jacob expect to meet **his son in the grave**, when Joseph was **devoured** by a wild beast? Evidently Jacob knew better than some modern broad-gauge writers, that "sheol" means a place of departed spirits, and if so, it was possible in spirit, for father and son to meet. (Gen. 38:31-36.)

Jesus descended into hades (hell). "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Ps. 16:10). He arose a victor, not only over the power of the grave, coming forth uncorrupted, but His Spirit having met the dying thief in Paradise—came forth a princely Leader, having rescued the hosts of the Old Testament saints, from the grasp of Hades. "When He ascended upon high, He led captivity captive," or according to Weymouth's translation:

"He re-ascended on high
He led captive a host of captives."

(Eph. 4:8, Ps. 118:18).

We can only summarize Scripture statements:

Hades is below, or under the earth.

It is described, the lowest parts of the earth (Eph. 4:9).

It is called the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40).

The Spirit of Jesus spent three days in these lower regions.

It consisted of two parts—a great gulf between (Lu. 16:26).

The sorrows of the impenitent on one side (Lu. 16:23).

Abraham and Lazarus on the other (Lu. 16:23).

The part where the righteous reposed was called Paradise (Lu. 23:45); also Abraham's bosom (Lu. 16:23).

Jesus preached to the disobedient of Noah's time (I Pet. 3:19).

The abode of Noah's disobedient hearers was called prison (I Pet. 3:19).

The ascension of Christ's spirit abolished Paradise below (Eph. 4:8).

He ascended from the lower region of earth to His tomb (Matt. 28:1-9).

Later he re-ascended with spirit and body reunited into the heavens (Acts 1:9).

The Old Testament saints went with Him (Eph. 4:8).

Paradise is **now above**. Believers depart to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23).

16 Therefore, He holds the keys of hades and of death. He unlocked hades, and led forth the ransomed ones, whose faith anticipated His redemption work—He snatched the keys from the girdle of death, releasing His own body from the grasp of the Grim Monster, and also many of the old time saints were raised in bodily resurrection with Him.

No doubt hades is a place. Death is a state. There are, however, principalities and powers in Satan's realm. There are lords, there are real potentates, whose dominion is over the dead; Jesus conquered these **Powers and personalities**. In ascension He triumphed **over them openly**.

Christ holds the keys. No saved spirit can be claimed by the lords of darkness; no body can be held by these captive potentates beyond the hour of enforced redemption.

Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ! Hence, while all

spirits of the saved departed ones are with the Lord, their bodies are embraced by death—"death cannot keep his prey." The dead shall hear His voice—and obey—they come forth, every man in his own regiment (order). They that are Christ's at His appearing—afterward the consummation.

"Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.
He arose a Victor o'er the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign."

CHAPTER III

A VISION OF THE CHURCHES.

Comprising a Forecast of the Entire Visible Church in the Process of Formation; in its gradual Deformation; in its Subsequent Reformation, and its Final Conformation to the World. (Rev. 2-3).

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Chap. 1:20.)

7
a.
There were seven literal churches in Asia. The geographical positions of these churches almost constitute a circle. Beginning at Ephesus and following a circumference, Smyrna will be reached a little northwest; Pergamos would be the next point, forming the north axis; then curving southward Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia are touched in the order named; Laodicea is the seventh and last, constituting the south axis. These cities are addressed in the order just put down.

There is evidently **design** in this. Further, this circle lies so near the center of the globe (earth) the fact should not be overlooked. Measuring from north, east, south and west, the equality of distance is surprising.

The primary object of the seven letters written to the seven churches in these historic cities, respectively, was intended for the very people living in these localities, in the year 96 A. D. The subject matter of these letters dealt with actual conditions existing at that time. Christ is the Overseer, Shepherd; yea, the High Priest, ministering in their midst. This closes the part of the vision distinguished as "**the things thou hast seen.**"

But there is a mystical meaning attached. They are treated in another sense; namely, "the things which are," in contra-distinction to "the things which shall be hereafter."

(1) What is the **mystery** of the seven stars and the seven candlesticks? Mystery there is. It is so stated and also implied. Christ remains in the midst of the churches until the removal of the true body of believers, when the "Day of the Lord" sets in. (See comments, Chapter 12). It must appear on the surface to all that Christ's symbolic presence amid the seven churches is not **confined**, therefore, to these seven local church communities, for these assemblies have long since passed out of existence.

(b) (2) Why are **seven** chosen, unless they suggest a cycle—representing the whole **time circle** of the entire visible professing church?

(3) Why are these **particular** seven selected from among many others, some of which were more prominent; viz., Jerusalem the first, or Antioch, the missionary home base, or Rome, the world empire capital? Herein lies wisdom Divine; in searching the characteristics corresponding to the gradual development of the church in general, and also ascertaining the **elements of decay** (leaven) which eventually would corrupt the whole.

These letters are a remarkable **series**. Not only are there seven letters, but each letter contains seven distinct features; each of these seven features finds a correspondence in its six companion messages.

A Seven-fold Address

Christ addresses each church with a distinct symbolic title. We enumerate them in the order they are recorded: (1) "He that holdeth the seven stars." (2) "First and last." (3) "Sharp sword." (4) "Flame of fire." (5) "Seven Spirits of God." (6) "Holy and true witness—the key of David." (7) "The Amen—the faithful and true witness."

The title employed in each instance is wisely adapted to the actual situation of the church addressed.

Ephesus is still an **orthodox** and **active** church. Jesus still has the ministers in charge. Hence He holds the seven stars. **Smyrna** is a suffering and **faithful** body. Jesus is a Comforter to them. He assures them that He is alive forever more. Though He was dead He lives. "Because **I live, ye shall live also.**" **Pergamos** is a **wordly** and **compromising** organization. Christ has a "Sharp sword" which He wields, piercing, cutting and dividing asunder. **Thyatira** is a **corrupt** and **adulterous** (both fleshly and spiritual) **system**. The Great Head of the church has "eyes like a flame of fire," searching, judging and condemning. **Sardis** is the **dead** and **secular** church. Jesus hath the "seven Spirits of God," the only renewing and quickening agency. **Philadelphia** is the **living, loyal** and **loving** "little flock." The Lord is the "Key of David," unlocking doors for effectual service for Him, the "Holy and true witness," enabling them to be true confessors of His name, and consistent advocates of His word. **Laodicea** is the **formal, conventional** and **popular democracy**. To them, the Lord Jesus is the "Faithful and true witness," the "Amen," urging a testimony of truth against their departure from "the faith."

Viewing these titles as a whole, they signify the fullness of Jesus Christ; yea, the completeness of our living Head, to thoroughly furnish His workers for every emergency. His all-sufficiency to keep, to comfort, to separate, to search, to revive, to empower for service and to establish in the truth.

The Seven-fold Commendation.

Our patient Lord is not a critical observer, but a faithful Guardian of the interests of His people. He is an ever present witness of all conduct and service. He is glad to see that which is commendable and hesitates not to say so. The Christian finds much to con-

tend against, but hearken to this: He sits still by the treasury; yea, He is always in the midst of the churches. The widow's mite, Mary's anointing, the centurion's faith, still meet His approval and receive His winsome smile.

Considering the various comments of our present, living Lord, do we not discover the fullness of what the church ought to be?

1. **Ephesus** is sanctioned for active, zealous and patient service. Her faith was unimpaired and her doctrine untainted. Like in the parable of the sower the seed was unmixed. And more to her credit, heretics found no quarters in this fold. All this was crowned by steadfastness when it cost opposition to represent the gospel.

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and hast borne and hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2:2-4.)

2. **Smyrna**, even more, meets with a tender recognition of costly integrity. The tribulation and poverty as the result of allegiance to Christ are especially noticed. Faithfulness "unto death" calls forth a special offer of reward, "a crown of life." They were in a hard place and the Lord knew it.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast SOME of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:9-10.)

3. **Pergamos** is less commendable; yea, much at fault; but nothing worthy of praise escapes the Great Shepherd. Their commendable points were a profession of faith and a confession of Christ. They were

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situated where "Satan's seat is." It was something in their favor to witness a good confession in the presence of the adversary.

"I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." (Rev. 2:13.)

4. Thyatira is praised for her works of charity. Also mention is made of faith and patience, but "works" eclipse "faith;" "and the last to be more than the first."

5. Sardis presents less merit than its predecessors. "Works" and a few feeble reminiscences remain as the sole commendable features as to the general state. But a few pious souls had kept themselves pure. They are recognized as a minority apart from the majority. The gracious Lord remembers them in a special promise:

"They shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead. . . . Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." (Rev. 3:1, 4.)

6. Philadelphia merits the highest endorsement of the Faithful High Priest. Strength, loyalty and fidelity are the admirable characteristics. These qualities took form in aggressive ministry, faithfulness to God's Word, and fidelity to Christ, for the name stands for the person. This body carries the unique distinction of being promised deliverance out of a great world tribulation.

"I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. . . . Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3:8, 10.)

7 **7. Laodicea.** Here again we meet a declension, the best that can be said by the Master is "I know thy works." Indeed, it is doubtful if this can be construed into praise at all. Nothing is left but half-hearted works—a form. Yet He takes note and indicates His love by presenting a personal opportunity to isolated souls whose "works" He considers as at least deserving for them, a chance for better things.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot." (Rev. 3:15.)

Grouping these commendable characteristics and uniting them in one, develops a **composite portrait** of a **perfect church**. But alas, such a church locally or universally has never been found. Out of all this external, changing, visible church, Christ is forming a mystic body within—this body shall be presented "without fault before the throne with exceeding joy."

The Seven-fold Admonition

constitutes the summary of all the church **ought not to be**. It is a complete review of all **spiritual dangers** incident to a believer, a local church, or the whole dispensational course of organized Christianity.

1. **The declension of love.** The advice is: "Nevertheless I have **somewhat** against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4).

This is defined as a "**fallen state**." It is the beginning of the down grade.

2. **A warning against "fear."** "Perfect love casteth out all fear." Love departing, fear knocks at the gate. Smyrna had good cause to fear from a natural standpoint; nevertheless, fear leads to disloyalty.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast SOME of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10.)

3. **A warning against false doctrine and popular opinion.** This danger lies in the denial of the Divine Headship and formulating creeds by the voice of the people.

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Rev. 2:14.)

4. **A warning against spiritual fornication.**

"Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." (Rev. 2:20.)

Whatever comes between God and man becomes an idol. From the image worship of Rome to the deification of man, to say nothing of heathen worship in its crudest idolatrous form, there arises a subtle, fascinating spell which binds whole continents to the mystic power of the devil. Demons lurk in a thousand devious paths. It is the menace of the times. Jezebel, the papacy, is but one of the daughters of the harlot woman.

All religions which dishonor the Head, Jesus Christ, as Spiritism, Science, so-called Christian, Theosophy and the numberless cults and fancies, are all patrons of the crime of spiritual harlotry. They forsake Christ, the true Husband of the church, and follow demons—for idolatry, whether it is the worship of an image made by man or the man himself, is spiritual adultery.

5. **A warning against spiritual death.**

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest, and art dead." (Rev. 3:1.)

The former sin leads to death. The conscience dies, because the God consciousness is lost. The sense of God is withdrawn, because the Spirit is grieved and eventually takes His flight. How unspeakable is that estate described by Paul, "who being past feeling God

gave over to work all uncleanness with greediness." Moral death follows spiritual death, and after that, what an easy prey the soul becomes to the "second death."

6. **A warning against losing faith.**

"Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast, which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11.)

Faith is the only hand we have to grasp Jesus, and His word. Faith is the point of Satan's attack from Eden to the Gates of Paradise above. "Hath God said?" is the Devil's battle cry. In these modern days his hosts are mobilizing to the summons. Who is ignorant of the assault upon the Deity of our Lord, and the Inspiration of His word? **"Hold fast."** He who prayed for Peter that his "faith fail not" is **our faithful Priest King.**

7. **A warning against indifference and worldly conformity.**

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot." (Rev. 3:15.)

The last, but not the least peril, is the self-sufficiency of the professing people of God, who believe this life consisteth in the abundance of the things it possesseth. If this were true, the church would be the greatest power in modern times. Her wealth, social culture and equipment even surpass the political and military forces of civilization. But her impotency was never more apparent. With nations in the throes of war, with millions of anti-Christian agitators abroad, how sadly true it is, she does not know that she is wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.

These perils compass the church. **They express every form of Satanic weapon** for this age. The adversary can introduce nothing new.

The Seven-fold Salutation

Each church has its specific address through its minister, but, what is more significant, back of each pastor

we believe God has His ministering angel, who stands in defense, even as Michael standeth up for His people (Israel) (Dan. 12:1).

And especially we further believe this is true when we apply these letters to successive **periods of church development.**

The Seven-fold Command.

“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.” This is repeated seven times. Christ dwells in the midst of the churches by the Holy Ghost. The Spirit is the Sovereign Administrator. Nothing can so forcibly call attention to the solemn and significant interest these letters contain. They are the **last messages of Jesus.** They are spoken **from heaven**; they are **repeated by the Holy Ghost.** How good of Him to tell us in advance what the future destiny of the church is **on earth**, as well as in glory. He is faithful to point out the dangers—those unseen rocks, foreseen by His omniscient eye. Shall we heed the alarm? Shall we direct our course by the map designed by the only Pilot who knows this trackless sea? Yea, shall we hearken to the **seven-fold**, the **complete**, the **final message** of the Holy Ghost?

These seven admonitions to hearken indicate there will be no further revelation to the church. They constitute the totality of God's instructions. “If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18).

Seven-fold Judicial Notice Served.

Christ is judging the church, not unto condemnation, but correctively. If they hearken, His blessing continues and rewards are assured; otherwise, He will deal with them with severe discipline.

1. **Ephesus** is threatened, if they fail to repent; thus “I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” This implies the removal of the church itself, which has long since been fulfilled.

2. **Smyrna** is offered a "crown of life," indicating no judgment on earth, but reward at the judgment seat, where all true believers appear at the coming of the Bridegroom. This is equivalent to judicial approbation.

3. **Pergamos** is warned that, if they repent not, He will come unto them quickly and will fight against them with the sword of His mouth. "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against thee with the sword of My mouth" (Rev. 2:16).

4. **Thyatira** is decisively admonished. "A great tribulation" can only be averted by a repentance for their deeds. "Behold, I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into **great tribulations**, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:22-23).

5. **Sardis** hears the announcement, "I will come on thee as a thief." "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Rev. 3:3).

6. **Philadelphia** is promised deliverance from the great tribulation. It is most significant that the coming of the Lord is now assuming a definiteness of expression which cannot otherwise be truly interpreted than having a strong relation to the personal coming of Christ to reward His faithful stewards. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:10-11).

7. **Laodicea.** Here the coming of the Lord is suggested as very near, even at the door. The great tribulation is possible for those whom He loves, unless they are zealous and repent. The vast majority are already rejected; that is, it is judicially determined "I will spue thee out of my mouth." **Organically**, the body is **disowned**. Individuals are advised to provide true riches and garments in view of judgment times.

"Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:17, 18.)

This is the sum of six of the seven divisions of the seven letters. We reserve the **seven rewards of the overcomers**, for the last chapter of our book. Such is a general survey as to the contents and practical features of these last messages of Jesus to the churches. Do they not show a fullness of ideal as to the matter discussed, that has an age-long application?

Let us examine the letters then, as to their **dispensational**—that is their **prophetic**—application.

Ephesus—the Era of Waning Love

This church enjoyed the ministry of remarkable men. Paul, John, Apollos and Timothy were a few of its pastors.

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians will show their capacity to receive the very deepest mysteries of the gospel. Now they are **waning**. Only thirty years have passed since this church was famed for their "faith and love to all the saints." Taking its whole history into consideration it becomes typical of the **entire epoch** of church history, known as the Apostolic church; that is, the prophetic period begins at the time John received his Patmos vision, and continues until all the apostles and perhaps their early successors had passed away.

The first stage of the church is anticipated as one of great activity and zealous endeavor. The church made great strides. The first century was a world-wide sowing of the seed, as reference to the first of the seven mystical parables (Matt. 13) will make plain. What great missionary tours Paul made!

One statement is worth volumes on this point: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8).

The **orthodoxy** of these times is unchallenged. A small sect called Nicolaitanes was endeavoring to spread its views, finding no response, but real antipathy from the Ephesians. The Lord approves their hostility to this heresy. It found little acceptance until a later period, namely the time prophetically embraced in the letter to Pergamos. There was one man who loved pre-eminence at Ephesus, Diotrephes; but while this hinted that the spirit of lordship was working in, it has as yet little sanction from the masses of believers.

The real charge against Ephesus was a condition epidemic in all the assemblies—the **declension of love**. This marked the first step toward a general apostasy.

The ultimate goal of organized Christianity is again and again predicted as a great apostasy. Jesus said, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Paul deplored a coming change, when the church "having a form of godliness," would "deny the power thereof." Peter foretold the uprising of false teachers among the believers, "who **privily** would bring in damnable heresies, **even denying the Lord** that bought them" (2 Pet. 2:1).

When did the drift set in? The answer is to be found in the Apostolic age. It began in the Ephesian declension. Love is the supreme grace in the Christian religion. The cooling of love's ardor is the first sign of trouble in the home. When love wanes, reverence, respect and mutual fellowship are marred. So in the household of God. Jesus demands the love of His family. He is the Head. Losing sight of His

personality as the sum total of Christianity, and introducing dogmas and creeds, has resulted in a **zeal for belief**, a contention for a faith that is not **the** faith which reposes in loving dependence upon the gracious Head. **The basis of fellowship is love.** Communion with Christ and the Father is the only means of knowing "what the will of the Lord is." Broken relation with God is the explanation of the general receptiveness to false doctrine.

The loss of the love that makes Christ pre-eminent in the affections, accounts for the separation of the body from its living Head.

Accordingly, our Lord would turn back the hearts of these earnest souls by threatening the removal of the very candlestick (the church of Ephesus) itself.

Smyrna—the Period of Great Persecution.

(About 100 A. D.-311 A. D. From death of John to Constantine)

The very name of this second church implies **suffering** (myrrh). Prophetically, its message portrays conditions during those early centuries, since known as the time when the "blood of the martyrs" was shed, and "became the seed of the church."

God permitted Satan to bruise the church in order to release the fragrance of His grace that is manifest in suffering. Only thus could He save it from worldly conformity. The wounded child flees to its mother for comfort, so the early saints fled for refuge and learned to repose on the bosom of Jesus. These two decades broke the alabaster box of ointment; the perfume has filled the centuries.

This season of trial was one of severe chastening, but never was the church so pure, nor her testimony so clear.

Ten successive persecutions complete the historical fulfillment of the prophetic statement, "Ye shall have tribulation ten days" (verse 10, chapter 2). These began under Nero, at the close of Apostolic times. The

intensity and extensiveness of these are well known. The whole power of the "fourth beast," Rome, was put forth to crush the infant church. Vilest calumnies were scattered abroad. The Christians were even charged with the burning of the city of Rome. (What will the fourth beast do when revived in modern times?)

Nor was the World Empire the only agent Satan employed. The martyrs were regarded as heroes to the extent of adulation by some. This had the effect of puffing up many of the tried ones. Those who were confined in prison or doomed to work in mines gradually assumed a dictatorial spirit which later assumed the right of reinstating in the church whomsoever they chose. In time, commemoration services were held for the martyrs, their names kept on record and annually memorialized. It is readily seen the canonizing of the saints found its origin in this practice.

The Synagogue of Satan is also mentioned. The local church at Smyrna suffered much from Judaism. The mystical meaning is deeper, however, and refers to the corrupting influence of Paganism, which was already making inroad in the **formation** of the Catholic church. The synagogue of Satan suggests a Pagan Temple. Roman religion is **Christianity paganized**.

Notwithstanding these Satanic innovations, the harvest of true saints was a multitude "who loved not their lives unto death." They were faithful **unto death**. For them is reserved the "crown of life."

Pergamos—the Epoch of State Religion.

(311 A. D.-590 A. D. From the death of Constantine to Pope Gregory I)

Earthly greatness is possibly implied in the name, Pergamos, a **tower**. The Lord stands in the way, as He did before Balaam, with a drawn sword. A new career faces the church. Pergamos bears the distinction of being the "**Seat of Satan**." Chaldean priests fleeing before the conquering Persians took refuge and

settled in this city. Their worship consisted in the deification of the emperor. Attulus III, the priest king of this Asiatic cult, left to the Roman people his mantle. Julius Caesar first assumed this royal priesthood under the title Pontifex Maximus. Thus, divine honors were conferred upon Roman emperors, later assumed by the popes. Pergamos boasted of a temple built in honor of Augustus.

The center of heathen religion we understand to be the meaning of the statement "**Satan's throne is there**" (W). The death of Antipas, the faithful martyr, shows Satan's determination to strangle Christianity. But later he changes his method and resorts to policy. He is now transforming himself into an "angel of light." In the year 313 John Constantine, Roman emperor, became sole Imperator upon the death of Licinius.

All edicts against the church were repealed and liberty of conscience was granted. All religions were tolerated. Constantine, as he became more familiar with the teachings of Christianity, saw in it the hope of the solidarity of his empire. He found the Christians law-abiding, whereas his heathen dominions were in constant uprisings. In 324 he issued an edict against paganism, and sought with might and main to force heathenism to the wall. He waged war in the name of Christianity and fought under the ensign of the cross. And now, pathetic to relate, a union of the church and state was effected. The sword coerced baptism upon unwilling subjects. Temple, altars, idols, priestly robes and vestments were consecrated (?) for Christian service and worship.

To harmonize turbulent factions creeds were changed, compromises made; yea, heathen rites and images were adopted. Satan's throne, verily, was in the midst. Three powers became one, as will be the final manifestation in these last days; Satan, Man and the Apostate church all one great Imperial consolidation.

The two doctrines prevalent in those times, the corrupting errors producing this unholy alliance and reducing the church to a state of unholiness and false testimony, were **Balaamism** and **Nicolaitanism**. (19)

The first finds its earliest expression in the seduced prophet, Balaam (Num. 23,24). For money he would curse the people of God. Failing in the attempt he showed Balak how he could cause Israel to sin. The sins Balaam instigated were idolatry and fornication. a

The essence of the doctrine is this: An intrusion of some object between the worshipper and God; illicit intercourse with the world. The motive of Balaam prophets is the "love of gain" (Jude 11). The Gnostics of the early centuries saw profit in being mediators between Paganism and the church, even as the traffic in things sacred is now a world-established practice. They labored unceasingly. They succeeded. We have a system whose churches hold high the cross as the emblem of their mission; think of the unholy traffic in indulgences, penance and purgatory salvation. Surely the prophets would rather take profit than be true prophets, notwithstanding the gracious Lord asks the question, "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

The effect of this world alliance remains to this present day. Jude warns us against **Balaamism** as a modern snare.

Nicolaitanism differs somewhat from Balaamism. b No sect is known to have existed bearing this name, but the word itself suggests people conquerors. It surely signifies the exaltation of men to church headship, the love of pre-eminence and lordship over God's heritage.

Ephesus rejected both these doctrines. Pergamos entertained these teachings to her detriment.

A comparison is drawn by our Lord, of this epoch to a mustard tree growing wild, with luxuriant growth, with birds lodging in the branches (Matt. 13). He said the fowls are demons. Placing two statements together we cannot escape the truth:

The birds, as demon spirits, lodge in the branches.

The throne of Satan is **there**.

Pergamos is now the habitation of Satan and his kingdom of darkness.

Thyatira—the Age of Papal Supremacy.
(590 A. D.-1517 A. D., From Gregory I to Martin Luther)

The designation of the fourth church carries with it the thought of feminine oppression, as the Greek words for daughter and tyrant seem to be blended. The thought of woman domination is further brought forward by reference to "that woman Jezebel." It is generally accepted that the little church at Thyatira was seduced by a real woman prophetess.

In the symbolic reference there is of course the wider meaning. The most ancient Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was born in Tyre. She innoculated Israel with heathen religion, bringing her hundreds of Baal priests with her to Samaria. She is, in consequence, **the symbolic priestess of idolatry introduced among the people of God.** Such is Papal Rome. Thousands of the individual members were children of this adulterous woman. But our Lord recognizes some whom He commends. They were sincere in their ignorance. This is true of Romanism today. Rome calls herself the **oracle** of God, claiming to speak with Divine authority. The church is called the mother church and the declarations of the Vatican are counted infallible.

Romanism is **idolatry**. She has turned her devotees from Christ to the Virgin; she has bound the word of God and established in its place the traditions of men; she has rejected the offering of Christ once for all and places eternal hope in the sacrifice of the mass. This is spiritual fornication.

"I will cast her into a bed and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent" (Rev. 2:22).

Space is given here to repent. During the great reformation, under Luther and on down to the present, we take it, is the **reprieve time** granted her. As a system, Rome lost her temporal power and from her ranks have come the Protestant organizations. But Rome's power is coming back; it is surely, though slowly, rising to its zenith. Our Lord has decreed her debasement **in the great tribulation**. Dark is the outlook for the Apostate church, for that includes not only Rome **but all them that commit adultery with her**. The whole organic system of Christendom is doomed after the mystic body is removed to be with the Lord. Our Lord's fourth parable of the leaven corresponds with this epoch.



Sardis—the Reformation Period.

(1517 A. D.-1750 A. D.)

Sardis, some believe, derives its name from the precious stone known as the sard or sardius. Our Lord's fifth parable on the mysteries of the kingdom carries a resemblance wherein He mentions the pearl of great price (Matt. 13). Others accept the thought of Hebrew derivation and have taken the suggestion of "a remnant" therefrom.

No doubt the reader was impressed and wondered why the destiny of Rome seems to be carried into the future, when the time limits were stated as closing in the fifteenth century. **That was the time Rome lost her pre-eminence**, but she will exist **parallel** with the three epochs of the three remaining church symbols.

A new development began under Luther—the great Protestant system, which is evidently the prophetic significance of Sardis.

It seems a reproach upon the great reformation to apply the words "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead." But are they not true?

The early reformers were good men, and the truths they mined from the debris of the centuries are vital. But it is a mistake to suppose the second century of the reformation compared with the first.

The address of the Lord is, "Strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die." Could this be said to Rome? What has Rome left?

The history of Protestantism in England after the first awakening reads little better than that of Rome. Surely when the protesting churches became state churches it became true "Thou art dead." The spiritual death prevailing throughout Germany and other lands after the recession of the power following Luther's preaching proves there was a lapse. Only in this light can we understand our Lord's admonition to "strengthen the things that are ready to die." The **coming of the Lord** now comes into prominence somewhat. He says, "If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief."



Philadelphia—the Epoch of Preparation (1850 A. D. until the Coming of the Bridegroom)

The city of "brotherly love" is an apt and significant name to be applied to the faithful in Christ Jesus, whose hearts have been turned from form to conformity to Christ. From a season a little earlier than the Wesley's great awakening in England, a new spirit has moved upon Christendom. Out of it has been born a people who believe in the power of God. The great revival of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the Lord, the supernatural element in religion, has been a steadily increasing incoming tide.

This period practically embraces the great missionary enterprise. Africa, a dark continent marked unexplored a century ago; China, shut in for 3000 years behind a great wall of stone and exclusiveness; India, held in a system of casts seemingly impregnable, and scores of other lands, some great, some small, have been opened by Him who holds the "Key of David."

Philadelphia is the **true body of Christ**, wherever you may find its several members. They believe in the Word of God and are scattering it abroad; they believe in Jesus, as the One who came in **the flesh** and **is coming again**. They are true to His word and His name. They are being fashioned to be pillars in His temple. They are assured **deliverance from the great trial coming upon all the world**, in contra-distinction to the **Apostate church**, which Christ says He will cast into great tribulation.

G Laodicea—the Period of Worldly Conformity

This last church of the seven is designed the church of **people rule**, as we infer from the word Laodicea. In point of time, prophetically, Philadelphia and Laodicea synchronize toward the end. The latter is a late development in the Christian world, the **modern, progressive, popular system**, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

Philadelphia, as a church, exists within the greater visible organization, Laodicea. Not one word has our Lord for this great constituency. The people have set up themselves as judges of what is right and have set aside the authority of God's word by interpreting it under the lens of critical scholarship.

1. **They are lukewarm.** This state implies a cooling of ardor and love. It was once hot, or it would not be tepid. The condition is nauseous to our blessed Lord. His gifts have been despised; His favor rejected; His Spirit grieved.

2. **They are very poor**, but not for lack of gold, for they are rich in worldly goods. It is rich in culture, influence, intellectualism. It is self-satisfied and self-sufficient. But it is not rich toward God, neither in faith, love or hope.

3. **They are really blind.** They are urged to accept the Holy Spirit. “Anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.” Oh, how difficult it is to show

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many professing Christians the actual meaning of true Christian living and cause them to see the truth of Christ's coming again.

4. **They are naked.** Like Adam and Eve gathering fig leaves and sewing them together to provide clothing for themselves, these modern professors are contending for self-evolution. They claim inherent divinity. They are ignorant of God's holiness and going about to establish their own righteousness, having not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

They cultivate a beautiful exterior, and congratulate themselves on the progress of religion and the race. They are blind even to Nature's instructions, for does not Nature teach us, that no living thing clothes itself from without? Trees, birds, creatures are all adorned from **within**.

Jesus offers white robes; He must be received within, and His gracious life will be manifested without.

How soon the Bridegroom is coming! His Bride is making herself ready. Alas, Laodiceans will not hearken. They have no wedding garment. Yet, He tarries at the door. There are **individuals** still to be entreated. There is no hope for modern Christendom. It is destined to judgment, but Jesus waits for a few, who may yet open the door. He would come in and hold sweet communion with us here. Fellowship here means union over there. Soon He will say, "Rise, my love, my fair one, and come away." But Laodicea is rejected. "I will spue thee out of My mouth."

Oh soul, which shall it be with thee—the part of the mystic church received into glory, or a place in the Apostate church, appointed unto great tribulation?

"O watch and be ready,
With your vessel full of oil,
And your lamp brightly burning,
And the wedding garment on,
And your soul daily yearning
For the Bridegroom to come."

CHAPTER IV.

A VISION OF THE THRONE.

Portraying a Heavenly Scene: the Jasper Throne of Might; the Crystal Sea, so Bright; and the Crowned Saints, in White (Rev. 4).

“After all this, I looked and saw a door in heaven standing open, and the voice that I had **PREVIOUSLY HEARD**, which resembled the blast of a trumpet, **AGAIN** spoke to me and said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which are to happen in the future.’” (Verse 1, W.)

Obviously, these words introduce a new theater of action, new scenes, and new characters, together with former actors, in a new role. Heaven, or the heavens, is the center of activity, in contrast with the former display of the church on earth and Christ “in the midst.”

The curtain has fallen; the church period is closed. In vain do we search in the prophetic perspective to find an **officially recognized** church on earth hereafter. True, there will be manifested the apostate church, as the vision advances; there will be seen subsequent hosts from earth joining the company of the redeemed on high, in successive raptures. But the church, at this stage, has completed her ministry to give way to a new witness—Israel.

We have witnessed the transformation of the faithful of Philadelphia to the image of Christ, and the conformation of the Laodiceans to the world. The “little flock” of Philadelphia is assured deliverance from the great Tribulation. The world mass of Laodicea is threatened with repudiation. Now, since the church is traced to its close, and a new order is about to be set in operation, where shall we look for the “**overcomers**,” but in the **midst of the throne**? Where may we find the **disowned**, but in the midst of the coming judgment?

John is silent here, as to the **translation** of the church. Paul described it as a "mystery." "I tell you a truth, hitherto kept **secret**, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the **twinkling** of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51 W). The inference, then, is well-founded that this mysterious translation occurs, in point of time, between chapters three and four. **We have seen** the church on earth. **We do not see** it in the act of flight; **but we do see** the first fruits of Redemption, **now before the jasper throne.**

The Revelator has lost the deep consciousness of the overmastering presence of the Spirit. As he is about to enter heaven's door, to see the **future**, (and by the **future** is signified the **things following** the first vision of the church on earth) he is again transported. This is further evidence of a new vision, now to be considered.

The Jasper Throne.

"Immediately I found myself in the Spirit, and saw a throne in heaven, and some One sitting on the throne" (4:2 W). This throne and the Glorious Occupant at once become the center of interest. This can be no other than the throne of the Eternal Father—the **throne of universal government**. The environment, as well as the Occupant of the throne, indicates a temple scene, the Holiest of All of the true Tabernacle "that the Lord pitched and not man."

The correspondence is complete. The **Glory** of the Lord, the **Cherubim**, the crystal sea, the altar of incense, the altar of sacrifice, the priestly courses, the great High Priest, will be successively revealed in four chapters. We are looking behind the veil of the true sanctuary. "**The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.**" Behold the throne established, upon which all thrones depend for perpetuation. "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. He changeth times and seasons. He removeth kings and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:20). Behold the

essential and eternal glory of God. He is the Throne-sitter, unnamed. All kings of earth are about to be deposed. Earth's Redeemer and His captive slaves of love are about to receive a formal delivery of the kingdom of God, which is to be set up on earth.

The scene is worthy of the occasion. "The appearance of Him who sat thereon was like jasper or sard" (4:3 W). **The glory of God** cannot be expressed adequately to human comprehension. Symbols are the only channels of communication. They are, necessarily, imperfect mediums, because they are earthly. The two precious stones signify the **glory** and **majesty** of God. The crystalline brightness of the jasper and the fiery red of the sardius convey a vivid comparison to Him who is a **consuming fire** and **dwelling in light unapproachable**. God covers Himself with an **armor of light**. "Oh Lord my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with honor and majesty" (Ps. 104:1). **The jasper and sardius** are exhibited as showing the **glory of creation** in Ezekiel (28:13). "Thou hast been in Eden, the Garden of God. Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius . . . the jasper." They adorned the priest's breast-plate (Ex.28:17-20), displaying the **glory of Grace**. They appear as characteristics of the throne, revealing the **glory of Judgment** (Rev. 4:3), and in the Bridal City, New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:19-20), manifesting the **governmental glory of God**.

The Rainbow-Encircled Throne.

"And encircling the throne was a rainbow, in appearance as an emerald" (verse 3 W). The bow set in the clouds, designated by God as a sign that He would no more destroy the earth by flood, is brought to remembrance. The token of the covenant with Noah is a **semi-circle**. Its colors are variegated. The rainbow about the throne is a **complete circle**, indicating the complete fulfillment of all promises as covenanted, under both law and grace, as soon to be realized. The emerald (green), the prominent ray, signifies, possibly,

the earthward relation of the covenant. It suggests springtime, new life for all nature. Before the eyes of the glorified saints will be the restful green—the color of the living earth, assuring that the purpose of grace will not alter, though God falter not in the execution of terrific judgment to consummate His gracious purpose.

A Judgment Throne.

21 “Out of the throne there came flashes of lightning, and voices, and peals of thunder” (verse 5, W). The throne is in action. The threefold threatening aspect is solemn warning to the world. The throne is about to assert power and judgment in the successive series of the opening seals, the sounding of the trumpets, and the outpouring of the contents of the vials of wrath upon the earth.

The scene is explained somewhat by the portentous display made at Mount Sinai. The phenomena attending the “giving of the law,” as incorporated and engraved on the two tables of stone, are described by Moses as accompanied by “thunders . . . and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud” (Ex. 19:16). A further description is given in Hebrews (12:19), “. . . nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words.” Now are presented the same character of threatenings and forebodings, which indicate the execution of judgment as immediately forthcoming, because the law is broken, and Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe, has been rejected by the world and the apostate church.

The scene presented anticipates Christ’s installation to the judicial power over the nations, as will appear in the succeeding chapters. “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son . . . and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man” (John 5:22,27).

The Encircling Thrones.

“Surrounding the throne there were also twenty-four other thrones, on which sat twenty-four Elders, clothed in white robes, with victors’ wreaths (crowns) of gold upon their heads” (Verse 4 W). Who are these? They are not the spirits of just men made perfect—they are **crowned**. Crowns are not worn by spirits, nor awarded until the believers appear before the judgment seat of Christ. “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give me **at that day**.” “That day” is “the day of the Lord.” On the contrary, they are **resurrected men**. Man is about to behold the consummation of Redemption. Christ, in prophetic order, has appeared the second time . . . “unto salvation.” The travailing of the saints on earth, as Paul reminds us in these words, “We, ourselves, though we possess the Spirit as a **foretaste and pledge** of the glorious future, yet we inwardly sigh, as we **wait and long** for **open recognition** as sons through the deliverance (redemption A. V.) of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23 W), is finished.

Behold the sons of God manifested in glory. We assert this with confidence. We reject the theory of the Bride of Christ **entering any portion of judgment times**. It appears incorrect from every angle of truth. The Elders are already enthroned at the judgment setting. Who are the Elders? **They are not unclothed spirits**, or spirits disembodied, as has been remarked. **They are not angels**. “To the angels hath He not put in subjection the age to come” (Heb. 2:5). Angels are a distinct class. They are so accounted for in Chapter 5:11. “Elders” is a term never applied to angels, only to men. Neither do angels wear crowns. Man’s present state is for a “short time lower than angels,” and while angels “excel in strength,” they are ministering spirits, sent to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Who are heirs? The brethren of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation.

(1) They sing the song of redemption (Chap. 5:9). "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." They were once sinners out of "every kindred." Once they were on the earth. "Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." They are a **representative** company, "twenty-four" in number. There are more than twenty-four **times** twenty-four different languages on the earth; so twenty-four could not include one from each "tongue and people" of earth, except they be taken in a **representative sense**. There were twenty-four **courses** of priests under the law. At David's time there were 24,000 priests. The actual number ministering in priestly service on a given occasion could not exceed one to each course (1 Chron. 24 and 25). The scene here suggests representatives of the several courses.

The Elders **eventually** will lead the choral praise and worship of heaven. We have **read** of the church as a kingdom of priests on earth in the very beginning of this book. We are here accorded a **sight** of the priests ministering in the temple of God in heaven.

Another suggestion may not be out of place. The twenty-four Elders may represent the saints of God in both the Old and New Testaments, as present before the throne. "Elders" is a common term to both Israel and the church. The Elders were the receivers of divine messages for the people, and also spoke for the multitude, (Read Ex. 19:3-8.) "By faith the elders obtained a good report." Faith's veterans arrayed in the galaxy of ancient heroes are designated as "Elders" (Heb. 11:2). The term is applied to New Testament saints as well. Peter and John were elders in the church (2 John 1; 1 Pet. 5:1).

Whether we regard the number twenty-four as founded upon the course of the priesthood, or as representing the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, of this we are certain, that we are gazing upon the redeemed at the time of the gathering of the firstfruits.

Further, the Elders cannot comprise a part of un-fallen creation. There is no such order recognized as

existing among angels, or archangels, in the Bible. We read that the "**saints shall judge the world,**" but nowhere, that any class of angels or created beings shall sit in judgment. The Elders are seated on thrones, before the great throne, and, it is evident, take a responsible part in the issues of this eventful judgment session.

Crowns are trophies of victory; who are the victors? Crowns are never worn by any order of beings save **redeemed men**. These crowns are said to be "The Crown of Life," "A Crown Incorruptible," "Crown of Rejoicing," "Crown of Glory," and "Crown of Righteousness" (Jas. 1:12; 1 Cor. 9:25-27; 1 Thess. 2:18-20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8). Satan, the anointed cherub, walking amid the sapphire stones of glory, before creation and his own downfall, did not wear a crown. **The crowns are expressive of the glory and honor once invested in man, but forfeited, and they also indicate additional glory won as overcomers through the blood of the Lamb, the image of God restored, the dominion of man recovered, the unity with God established—our complete inheritance won back through Jesus, the Son of man, who espoused our lost cause, and has returned to God with the spoils of victory.**

We see not yet all things put under man, but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor—this is faith's vision. In the present vision of **prophecy we see the saints crowned with glory and honor**. They have come into glory. Faith has turned to sight.

The Crystal Sea.

"And in front of the throne seemed to be a sea of glass, resembling crystal" (Chap. 4:6 W).

The analogy here apparently is to be found in correspondence with the Tabernacle. Moses erected the earthly Tent of the Congregation, according to a pattern God showed him on the Mount. Solomon's more costly and magnificent Temple conformed in essential detail to the Tabernacle Moses pitched. Both followed the plans and specifications of the Great Architect.

The Molten Sea and Laver, accordingly, were earthly types of the heavenly reality—the **glassy sea**. In the earthly courts, the priests used the laver and molten sea, as means of priestly purification. They laved their hands, and bathed their bodies and cleansed their priestly garments.

Both priests under law, and royal priests under grace, constantly were required, and are still required, to be inwardly and outwardly cleansed, from the soiling touch of earth's defilement. But the sea of bright crystal points forward to a state of holiness perfected and permanent.

Wherefore "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). And such a **crystallization of character**, the heavenly priesthood shall possess. Glass may denote the **fixedness** of character; and surely the crystal suggests the nature of that holiness, which must be in keeping with the righteousness and glory of Him who sits upon the jasper throne.

What a scene of calm and unruffled peace stretches out before these throne occupants! Earth's seas surge in restless billows; a true perspective of the souls of men, amid earth's changes. But a sea of glass so smooth and bright speaks of that blessed estate, unruffled by adverse minds, undisturbed by natural forces; but peace crystallized through eternal years.

The Worship Around the Throne.

It is true that in heaven His servants do serve Him, and worship constitutes a large part of that service.

We are permitted to observe the character of heavenly worship **before** the earth is placed on a **Redemption basis**, or the credentials are placed in the hands of our Great Redeemer, authorizing Him to make conquest of the Nations.

The nature of the worship is somewhat different as to **theme** and **leaders** from the new **form** and **order**, as will subsequently appear in Chapter 5. The present scene discloses the eternal order of things, as it has existed for ages past. The Cherubim, or living creatures, **here**, we take to signify those holy beings whose unceasing praise and close **proximity** to the throne are symbolized by the golden figures, bending over the Ark of the Covenant, and seen in Isaiah, the sixth chapter, in reverent and adoring worship.

The living ones of the Apocalypse are a complex formation, possessing characteristics of both cherubim and seraphim. They sound the same praises: "Holy, Holy, Holy," art Thou, "Lord God Almighty" (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).

One most significant feature that marks a transition period at hand, is the addition of worshipers, namely, **the priestly throng of Elders**, who now follow the lead, and join with these worshipful creatures. "Thou art worthy, Oh Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Chap. 4:11).

The whole **theme** is **creation**, because the enforcement of Redemption on earth is still a future subject for consideration and application.

Well may we ponder the humility, reverence and devotion of the heavenly worshipers. The sense of awe that increases more and more, the nearer they approach to God, and as the vision of God becomes clearer, and the purity of the soul intensifies, is a lesson for all believers. The veiled faces, as the seraphim draw near the crystal light of Him who sits enthroned; the absence of all wish to display their own perfection in spirits who are perfect; the freedom and willingness to go anywhere on any errand of mercy—these are some of the various thoughts suggested by the throne and its companies of worshipers.

Nor is this all. Their worship is **unceasing**. No weariness, no lassitude, no division of heart or **purpose!**

May **this** spirit be inspired **in the church, before** the church is promoted to swell the choral praise of the orchestral ranks on high!

“Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy
sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert and art, and evermore shalt be.”

CHAPTER V.

A VISION OF THE CHERUBIM.

Tracing the Glory of the Cherubim; in Past Symbolic Signification; in Ancient Governmental Relation; in Present Worshipping Adoration; and also the Glory of the Church in Future Exaltation, as the "Living Ones" in Their Judicial Administration. (Chap. 4:6-9; Chap. 5:6-11).

"And midway between the throne and the Elders, and surrounding the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind" (4:6). (24)

The "living creatures" in the midst of the throne are not "beasts," as the authorized version renders, but intelligent beings, and should be designated "living creatures" or "living ones;" so agree the revised translation and several good authorities. }

There is reference to these beings of superior intelligence some thirty times in the Old and New Testaments. Ezekiel (Chap. 1:4-8) designates them as "living creatures." The identification is complete; both the vision of Ezekiel by the river of Chebar, and the vision of John on Patmos, correspond as to the four faces and the name. (25)

They are called **Cherubim** in Ezekiel, the tenth chapter. A comparative account of these remarkable beings, noting their similarities and the dissimilarities, is helpful and instructive:

The Cherubim in Ezekiel

Each Cherub had four faces.
Each Cherub had four wings.
Each Cherub had four wheels.
Each Cherub was full of eyes.

The whole body, and their
backs and their wings, and
their wheels were full of
eyes round about.

The sapphire throne of glory
is above them.

The judgment of Jerusalem
is the occasion of this cher-
ubic activity.

The judgment of Israel from
the north, under Babylon
as the earthly instrument
of chastisement.

Wheels are seen running on
the earth, indicating the
coming of earthly judg-
ment.

The Living Ones in Revelation

The four combined, present-
ed the same four faces as
the former.

Each creature had six wings.
There are no wheels.

"Full of eyes in front and be-
hind."

"And in every direction full
of eyes in front and be-
hind."

They are in the midst of the
jasper throne of glory.

The judgment of the world
is the issue here.

The judgment of the world
from on high—heavenly
instrumentality.

Wings denote a wider sphere
of action; as ministers of
the throne, the cherubim
are about to execute heav-
enly judgment.

Each living creature had one
face.

Therefore,

A Vision of Governmental Glory

is before us. The Cherubim ever symbolize the **glory of God**. Paul speaks of the "Cherubim of Glory." Their dwelling place has always been in the very midst of the throne. On earth, the symbolic presence of the Lord was called "the Shechinah," and when Israel prepared a habitation for the Lord Most High, He dwelt in the inner Sanctuary upon the Mercy Seat and between the **Cherubim**. The glory they manifest is threefold:

The glory of God in government.

The glory of God in holiness.

The glory of God in Redemption.

Four is the governmental number.

"The first living creature . . . resembled a lion, the second an ox, the third had a face like that of a man, and the fourth resembled an eagle flying. And each of the four living creatures had six wings, and in every direction, and within, are full of eyes; and day after day, and night after night, they never cease saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God, the Ruler of all, who wast and art and evermore shalt be." (Chap. 4:7 W.)

God's dealing with the world in relation to Redemption employs His **own triune** signature. When He is dealing with the world in judicial relation, **man's signature "four"** is employed. The number three suggests divine perfection; four designates the universality of the race and the world. The race is combined under "four" divisions—"Nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues." There are "four" seasons, "four" elements, "four" winds, "four" presentations of Christ in the "four" gospels, "four" world universal empires, etc.

Hence in **Ezekiel's judgment vision**, the Cherubim have four faces, four wings, four wheels; and in the **judgment scene of Revelation**, the same four faces appear, also the characters are four. Four is only a representative number, standing for myriads of the same rank. The symbolic faces are selected from the animal creation: man the king of intelligence, the lion the king of the forest, the ox king of the fields, and the eagle king of the air.

The first, the lion, symbolizes majesty and strength (Dan. 7:4; Amos 3:8). The second, the ox, exemplifies service and sacrifice (1 Cor. 9:9; Ex. 20:24). The third, man, exemplifies intelligence and reason. The fourth, the eagle, indicates keen sight and rapid flight (Deut. 28:49; Job 39:27-30). These characteristics combined express the character of God's throne. They are "attributes of **Judicial nature** expressed through **human or angelic** instruments according to the Sovereign pleasure of God."

A further illustration, proving the Cherubim are the **agents of Divine Government**, can be learned by

reference to Edenic times. Sin committed provoked judgment: "So He drove out the man; and placed at the east of the garden of Eden, **Cherubims**, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).

The number is not specified, but the plural form is used. It is sufficient to the point here, to note the **official capacity** exercised in executing authority, under God, in banishing the unhappy family from Edenic bliss, and barring their return with threatened death.

Wherever reference is made to these "living ones," they are seen in restless activity. They are full of energy, as symbolized by their association with constantly moving wheels, ministering judicial decrees, in Ezekiel's vision. The same energy is displayed in a different manner in the Apocalypse. "They rest not day and night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, and was and is to come.'" They are here presented in the holy activity of worship. This suggests another sphere of service these "living ones" represent: It is

A Vision of Holy Guardianship.

They are the caretakers of God's holiness. The body-guard of the King Eternal, we may reverently say. In this capacity, they are portrayed both in the Tabernacle and Temple, and subsequently in the vision of Isaiah. "In the year Uzziah died, I saw the Lord . . . and before Him stood the Seraphim, each having six wings" (Is. 6:1-2).

A different name is employed here, but it is not necessary to infer another order of heavenly beings presented, but rather, another **sphere of service** is designated. "Cherubim" constitute the official title of the living creatures in **earthward Judicial ministry**. "Seraphim" is the official title in **heavenly** and holy service, as their **worship, humility** and **obedience** seem to indicate. It was a seraph who applied the cleansing

live coal from the altar to the lips of the prophet, a ministry of **holiness**; while the cherubim administer **judgment**. Justice and holiness are different attributes of God.

It is impossible to show the cherubim and seraphim as different orders of created beings. Not one verse of Scripture can support such an assumption. But they do describe **different official ministries**, the one, the governmental agents of Deity; the other, the custodians of Holiness. This twofold ministry is hinted at in Hebrews (1:6-7 W), "And let all God's angels worship Him." Moreover of the angels He says, "He changes His angels into **winds**, and His ministering servants into a **flame of fire**."

Cherubim are called "mighty ones."

Seraphim are called "burning ones."

Like the mighty winds in action, they discharge earthly rule; like a flame of fire, dwelling in His presence, they minister unto the Lord.

It should be particularly noticed the vision of the **Apocalypse** presents the "living ones" as possessing the characteristics of both. . . Corresponding to the cherubim, they are in number four, with faces four, and many eyes, without and within. Resembling the seraphim, the living creatures have **six** wings and worship, repeating unceasingly the thrice "Holy" of adoring praise.

We conclude, that as an **order** of created beings, they are one, but in service they **differ**. As agents of Judgment, they are cherubim; as guardians of Holiness, they are seraphim, and when **both are combined**, the future office, sphere and glory of the Redeemed church is symbolized, in its **heavenward** and **earthward** relation.

The seraphim, with six wings, are described by Isaiah in worship, "With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly."

The **attitude** reveals jealousy for the glory of God. Their own dazzling beauty is hidden.

The **action** is worshipful, ceasing not to cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

The **aspiration** is a ready obedience, "with twain they did fly."

We have an inclusive vision of these holy creatures, therefore, engaged in the ancient order of worship, and in official administrative power, around the Judgment throne of the Eternal. The next chapter of Revelation will show the **present living creatures**, superseded by a **new administration, constituted by the glorified church**. To prepare our minds to receive this truth, let us consider the living ones in another aspect, most precious and inspiring.

A Vision of the Glory of God in Redemption.

The twofold office just described has been held by the "living ones" at least since the creation of our race. Will they hold this office **forever**? Our reply is instant and confident, **No**.

Man was created for a **short time lower than** the angels. "It is not to the angels that God has assigned the sovereignty of that coming world. . . . Thou hast set him (man) to govern the work of Thy hands" (Heb. 2:5, 7 W).

Angels as Cherubim, consequently, are but temporary ministers of the throne. The argument is well founded. **Cherubim are symbols of Redemption Glory**. If they are symbols, they at present typify man's relation to God when **Redemption** is completed **for man, in man and upon man**. The final stage is to be accomplished when the redemption of the body takes place. The appearing of Christ for His church is the time of the full Redemption of His body (1 Thess. 4:16).

1. **In Eden the Cherubim** were not only guardians of the tree of life, but **types of promised grace**. As emblematical of the glory of God, they visibly disclosed to man his **lost glory**, for man was created in glory and honor—for this reason, he needed no bodily apparel. He was, no doubt, resplendent in light as a garment, until sin deprived him of his bright gar-

ments of glory, and he knew that he was naked. The effulgent brightness of the cherubim could not but remind him of his lost estate.

A sword of death barred the way of access to Eden, and approach to the tree of life, and was a constant reminder of the judgment fallen.

2. **In the Holy of Holies.** . . . "And he made the mercy seat of pure gold. . . . And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them" (Ex. 37:6-7). These golden figures were fashioned on the lid of the ark—the mercy seat. Their bending attitude indicated their **contemplation** of the blood, sprinkled on the mercy seat. Blood is in evidence, but the sword is not seen.

Now, if every utensil, furnishing and all material entering into the construction of the sanctuary and utilized in the worship conducted therein, conveys a typical message, what does the veil covered with Cherubic figures, and two golden Cherubim, signify?

The lid of the ark of the covenant speaks to us of **Christ**, our mercy seat. **But the mercy seat and the Cherubim were beaten out of one solid piece of gold.** "Out of the mercy seat made he the cherubim, on the ends thereof" (Ex. 37:8).

Can anything be clearer? The Blood of Christ makes the redeemed **one** with Him, for both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified **are all one**. Therefore, these "living ones" symbolize the **glory** into which the blood-bought church is to come. They sing, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." This is the glory of Redemption, which the Cherubim emblemize.

Let us be reminded once more of the two-fold service of the "living creatures." It is the glorious ministry of judgment and power earthward, and of worship and holy service heavenward. **This is the full glory of Redemption**, restoration to Divine Holiness, and protection of Divine Holiness; restoration of earthly dominion, and support of Divine government on earth.

The "living ones" in Chapter four, are symbols of the government of God, **as it is and was**. At the Rapture, the church—the Elders—are translated and enthroned as a priestly class, before the new order of government for the judgment period is arranged. Hence, the church appears as a priesthood, and is led by the cherubim in the worship of God.

In the succeeding chapter, a **new administration is in the act of inauguration**. If a new government is sometime to be set up, and the saints reign with Christ, then it must necessarily follow that the church will be the **judicial power** of such a new regime. In what relation, then, can the Cherubim of the **ancient order** be ministers of power in an age committed to man, and the Son of man?

None; the old order **retires, and that forever**. The saints' probation, in which they are **lower** than angels, **ends**. They will supersede the "living creatures" of the present. It is in the fifth chapter, the **Redeemed of earth are become the "living creatures."** No angels are on the scene as laid in Chapter four, **before** the installation of Christ and the saints. But after the Lamb receives the Divine right to **earthly Kingship**, and the Elders and "living ones" shout, "Thou hast made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign on (over) the earth," then the angels are viewed as a **distinct** class. They have retired from their former estate, and now **follow** the worship of the saints—they cannot **sing redemption's song**, but they join in worship as best they may, **saying**, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing" (Chap. 5:12).

There are both Elders and "living ones," and both being symbolic types does not alter the conclusion the prophetic sphere of the Cherubim is fulfilled at the Coming of Christ, hence the **kingly** rights of the saints **begin** when Jesus takes unto Himself power over the nations.

The church is now a royal priesthood; and will appear in that capacity in glory **until** the judgment is put into the hands of the saints. This accounts for the Elders alone representing the church in the fourth chapter.

Some may inquire, then, Why do Elders appear in the fifth? Because the priesthood is eternal. Some of the redeemed may ever be priests; others kings, or it may be that all will be honored in the double official capacity. If this be true, it takes two symbolic classes to represent the two-fold glory of the church, which, after all, we take to be the intent of the vision.

The Vision of the Dominion of the Redeemed.

The Cherubim guarded the two tables of the law, which were kept within the ark. There were two tables, consequently two Cherubim. In the Apocalypse there are four faces and four "living ones." Under **law**, Israel was the custodian of the law; under **grace**, the **church** is guardian of the gospel. The gospel manifests Christ. The faces of the Cherubim may typify Christ in the four gospels.

Royalty—Matthew wrote of Christ, the King—symbolized by the lion.

Sacrifice—Mark wrote of Christ, the Servant—symbolized by the ox.

Humanity—Luke wrote of Christ, the Son of Man—symbolized by the man.

Deity—John wrote of Christ, the Son of God—symbolized by the eagle.

The church will bear the image of Christ at His appearing. By the power of the gospel, we are being changed into His image. May not the faces of the "Living ones" signify the accomplished transformation into Christ's likeness? "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).

These four faces are assuredly connected with man and earth. Man, as the head of creation, stands in the midst (number 3) of the lower creatures. But man's redemption means redemption for the whole creation

(Rom. 8:20-22). Man's dominion is lost. He once was "Monarch of all he surveyed." The Edenic Cherubim show this, but they were planted "Eastward in Eden," whence our Coming Redeemer is to appear. Christ, as man and for man, will recover all that is lost, else why is the brute creation emblemized in the faces of the symbolic creatures of Redemption?

The Tabernacle and Temple, sheltering these holy types in the innermost sanctuary, taught the purpose of God toward man, through man—His Son. **To redeem man was the eternal purpose.** Through the blood of Christ, the innermost glory of God is to be reached. That glory exalts man as lord of creation, and in the uplift of the man the whole creation is to be freed from its bondage, and eventually restored to God's original beneficent purpose.

It must, then, appear that the effort to find God's message in the Cherubim is not a mere attempt at soaring to heights beyond reach, but rather, an honest pursuit of truth as hidden in symbol. Where may we find in the Book of Inspiration a finer, richer **portrait** of full Redemption?

In the song (Chap. 4:11), **angelic** Cherubim shout their highest praise—an **oratorio of creation**—but in Chap. 5:9, the redeemed "living ones" reach the highest note of the **triumphant chorus of Redemption**. The ancient order **shouts aloud** of power and creative glory; the new order **sings** of power and Redemption glory. All songs in heaven's minstrelsy are not alike. The song of Redemption cannot be sung by seraph, cherub, archangel or ministering spirits. Man **alone** is redeemed from **sin**. The burden of that song is, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Chap. 5:9). It is the song of freedom; it carries with it the new strains acquired in bondage. We shall stand before the Crystal Sea, and from that high vantage point look down upon the depths in which sin placed us, and from which grace raised us. We shall then sense the awfulness of sin, and blessedness of deliverance. We shall recall how we deserved to die, and how Jesus

provided a ransom. That song of deliverance we shall be able to reach in all heights and depths in understanding, with ecstatic spirit.

Angels can only stand and listen. Man alone is redeemed from suffering. The musical schools of earth, the mastering of technique, are not enough to produce musicians. Musicians must have hearts, and few find their hearts until trial comes. But listen to that song over there; it is filled with passionate joy; it is trilled with remembrance of the compassionate Jesus. It is the song of burdens lifted, nights illumined, seas divided and victories won.

Can any seraph or cherub of old sing a song like that? We do not read that they sing at all.

Man alone is redeemed from death and the grave. Whether we are translated without dying, or we may rise with the triumphant first ranks, it is emancipation just the same, from the power of man's last foes.

Angels know nothing of pain, nor the anguish of dying; they know nothing of the parting word, the last look, the final touch of love. They have never known the weakness in death, and so will never know the sweetness of resurrection.

Man alone is Redeemed to Reign, therefore it is the song of the overcomer, the victor—"We shall reign on (or over) the earth."

CHAPTER VI.

A VISION OF THE LAMB.

Concerning a Sealed Book containing the Record of Earth's Ruination and the Redemptive Right to its Reclamation; an Angelic Proclamation and a Universal Declination; the Presentation of the Redeeming Lamb, and His Acclamation as worthy to enforce the Redemption of the Purchased Possession. Rev. 5.

The fifth chapter opens as a continuation of the former scene. We are permitted to gaze longer, while details are brought into relief. The first observation will show a supreme **crisis** moment in relation to the universal governmental throne of the Eternal God. Already the "firstfruits" of redemption have somewhat changed the past order of the majestic heavenly court, as is at once made apparent, by the encircling thrones, in number, twenty-four.

It was formerly shown that the Elders symbolize the various Priestly rights of the redeemed. They have taken no part in the executive sessions hitherto. It must be obvious to all that redeemed man cannot assume judicial power until redemption is consummated in himself. This will take place at the first resurrection. The keynote of the chapter under consideration is the placing of Divine Government upon a Redemption basis; upon such a basis only fallen man can be exalted. The promise is "To him who overcomes, I will give the privilege of sitting down with Me on My throne, as I have overcome and have sat down with My Father on His throne" (Chap. 3:21 W). Jesus is assured of His own throne. He is entitled to a throne, won "by the suffering of death" (Heb. 2:9).

The scene before us is truly without parallel. **It is the transfer of government, and the installation of a new administration,** in which Christ, as the Ancient of Days, is about to take His seat, entering upon His

full redemption rights, while the redeemed are at the same time advanced to judicial honor—for Christ's triumphs are to be actually shared with His associated body, the church.

While the vision is still set in heaven and the jasper throne, and its Majestic Occupant is the center of interest, and the various ranks of personages are grouped in relative positions of honor and glory, there are new features of overwhelming interest disclosed. First and most prominent is a "book," or parchment, "sealed with seven seals."

An Inheritance Awaiting Redemption,

or, the record of a forfeited inheritance, seems the most satisfactory explanation of this seven-sealed book. Elsewhere, we read of the "book of life," the register of God's redeemed family; and of the books, "the records of human actions," but the sealed book commands even greater interest, and its presentation awakens unparalleled jubilation and celebration in heaven at its opening, and on earth, unprecedented convulsions and consternation.

In an attempt to designate and define the book and its contents, one must consider the **person and character of Him who receives the book**; the **circumstances under which it is delivered**; the **song its transfer inspires**, and the **nature of events the breaking of its seals occasions**. A careful examination of these facts will compel the mind to fix its thought upon **Redemption**, as the key to the contents of the "book." Creation was the theme of the praise in chapter four; redemption is the keynote of the song of chapter five. We assume, therefore, and with good reasons, the "book" is the **title deed to earth**—its possession gives the holder the right, legal, moral and redemptive, to dispossess all usurping tenants.

1. **Jesus' right to break the seals** will be found to exist in His character as the "Lamb bearing the marks of slaughter." Only in the capacity of sacrifice is He

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adjudged worthy, or able, to open the "book." Others have failed; neither heaven, nor earth, nor hades can provide one whose qualifications entitle him to receive the book and separate its seals. Angels, Archangels, unfallen beings as they are, in silence confess their unworthiness. There is one theme these excelling beings do not comprehend; one supreme service they may not render, however willing they may be, and that is redemption.

This sealed "book," we conclude, is not concerned with **creation or prophecy primarily, but the redemption of man's lost inheritance.** It is true the opening of the "book" will affect all created beings, and, also, disclose the **fulfillment of all prophecy**, as it relates to the recovery of earth's dominion; but it contains more than an unveiling of those methods and means to be employed in Judging the Wicked One and his subjects—it contains a registered right—a legal claim no man may enforce, who has not qualified as a lawful redeemer.

2. **Redemption is much more comprehensive than many suppose.** The **cross** exacted the **price** of redemption; the **throne** is exercising the **privilege** of redemption; the **crown** will exert the fullest **power** of redemption.

God is now dealing with the world consistently with the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His mediation at the right hand of Majesty on high. Who can estimate the preciousness of the blood of Jesus, and its present efficacy in saving the sinner, sanctifying the believer, and securing even the quickening of the mortal body? (Rom. 8:11.) Who can measure the extent of the restraint exercised even on the heathen world by virtue of the propitiating blood, or the sustaining grace manifested on behalf of believers, in answer to pleading blood presented by our Lord Jesus, the Great High Priest? Incalculable are the blessings enjoyed by the church, which He has purchased with His own blood.

“The Father hears Him pray,
His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
The presence of His Son.”

Even the world, forgetful and ignorant of God, is directly or indirectly receiving an unspeakable boon through mediatorial mercies. All that is good in civilization; the joys of Christmas-tide, national liberty, the emancipation of womankind, the sanctity of marriage and of the home, are but streams of blessings flowing from the cross.

A truly wonderful living power is operating throughout the world, rescuing, reclaiming and restoring souls. Nor have the most advanced Christians fully appropriated the present procuring efficacy of the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, nor all the grace of the everlasting High Priest, for which we were apprehended. Who has possessed the whole land the boundaries of which are defined by that promise, Christ “is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption”? When faith has explored the depths of the riches of His grace, **there remaineth a future power Redemption will exert, exceeding the fondest hopes of the most devout.**

The Future Consummation of Redemption.

“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh” (Lu. 21:28).

According to Jesus, His second coming was to be the harbinger of redemption in its completeness. Paul indicates the fullest scope of redemption is future. Romans (8:21-23 W) will show a much wider application at the close of the church age. “Yet there was always the hope that at the last creation itself would also be set free from the thralldom of decay, so as to enjoy the liberty that will attend the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation is groaning together in the pains of childbirth until this

hour." This statement embraces creation in its entirety. A comprehensive view is to be found in Ephesians (1:7, 13, 14 W). "It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have our deliverance—the forgiveness of our offences—having believed in Him, we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; that Spirit being a **pledge** and **foretaste** of our inheritance, in **anticipation** of its future redemption." Much, therefore, embraced in our purchased possession is a subject of future hope.

Upon these considerations, we risk the statement that the scene we are contemplating ushers in the day of redemption. Christ is about to assert His rights and enforce a government on the basis of redemption. The mediatorial session is closed. Judicial procedure as a Kinsman Redeemer now begins.

The Law as Touching Redemption.

Redemption means to buy back. A Redeemer is one who assumes the discharge of another's debts, obligations and encumbrances to property, together with the release of the debtor from personal bondage, to which the law made him liable for debt.

Man's sin involved his person and posterity, spirit, soul and body, and his possessions likewise. It is needless to discuss the effects of the fall and ruination of man. What chiefly concerns us here is, the **earth** was cursed for man's sake. His original estate was, as set forth in Hebrews (2:7 W), "With glory and honor, Thou hast crowned him, and hast set him to govern the works of Thy hands"; and according to Genesis (1:26), "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and the cattle, and **over all the earth.**"

It is obvious man at the present is not "monarch of all he surveys, that his right there is none to dispute." Creation is in hostile rebellion against its appointed ruler. True, the winds and waves obey man's will, when sails are adjusted to the course they take; true,

human intellect harnesses the fiery electric beast, and compels domestic and commercial service, which it yields according to its own law, but when man is negligent, how frequently the electric volt revolts! The ground is tilled, but it is a fight for subjugation, and the question of supremacy is unsettled. The harmless grain and the fruit of the vine distill a deadly poison, which contains a subtle fascination, luring man to a bondage worse than death—at last “it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder.” Continue the thought to its limit, if limit can be reached: our race is humiliated; man is proven a slave to the creatures and natural forces he once controlled. Count the dead that go down in shipwreck; count the unfortunate victims of storm and tempest; count the ghastly faces of the slain in battle; count the serried ranks that never end, falling under the curse of disease, bred in elements ever pregnant with death; then who can deny that man is a crownless king—a throneless monarch? Who can question that his rights are alienated and his inheritance forfeited beyond his own recovery? We do not deny some strides have been taken in the onward conquest the race is making to halt the enemies of spiritual, social and general progress, but it is startlingly true, “We see not yet all things put under him.” God in the fullness of time will provide a deliverer.

The law concerning the redemption of alienated inheritances can be found in the book of Numbers (27:11). Under the Mosaic law, inheritances were **redeemable** during the year of Jubilee. Every fiftieth year was proclaimed the year of Jubilee. Two important facts, in this connection, should be impressed upon our minds: (1) **The day of Atonement** ushered in this festive year. It was on the ground of atonement slaves were declared free, and inheritances subject to redemption. That law remains a basic principle of Divine government. As God dealt with Israel in typical offerings, He is **now** dealing with mankind in recognition of the offering of Christ “once for all.” In

the future, He will deal with **the earth and its government** in full recognition of Christ's purchase—creation's deliverance will be the result. This is the law: "If his father have no brethren, then you shall give the inheritance to **his kinsman** that is next to him of his family, **and he shall possess it**" (Num. 27:11).

(2) **A redeemer qualified to act.** Kinsman means redeemer. That relation demanded one who possessed ability to cancel all encumbrances and release a bonded or mortgaged estate. Also it was imperative the one undertaking to act in the capacity of a redeemer be a kinsman—a blood relation of the original owner.

Our blessed Christ has fully qualified to discharge the duty of a Kinsman. His Incarnation makes Him akin to us. His holy life assures us of His acceptability to the Father. His sinless death guarantees the adequate discharge of the sinner's debts. Faith and surrender of all to Him assures our personal emancipation. He is coming again. By virtue of the blood of the slain Lamb, the year of Jubilee (the thousand years) will be proclaimed. The scene before us anticipates this proclamation just a little. **He must publicly be invested with the right to proceed on a redemption basis**, before He enforces the dispossession of that evil spirit now ruling the disobedient. A summary of these facts may simplify the matter under consideration, and show the result of the application of this principle.

Satan mortgaged the soul and body of man through sin.

The dominion of man reverts to God, while man is sold under sin.

Satan, possessing the allegiance of man, lays claim to the earth.

Man is disqualified to discharge the debt, or release his domain—he has nothing to pay.

Under God, a kinsman may assume his debt and recover his dominion.

A kinsman must belong to our race—bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

Where can such a kinsman be found? We are all guilty before God.

The race can provide no redeemer; we are all condemned by the law.

God's wisdom and love solved the problem and provided a Redeemer.

The solution is first to be found in the Incarnation of Christ.

In assuming our nature, **He espoused our cause.**

He obligated Himself to the race and became obedient to death on the cross.

He becomes responsible for our sins and our lost inheritance.

He pays the debt. Life for life. He gave His life upon the altar. It is an Atonement for our souls.

He has fully qualified as our Redeemer.

In God's time, He will be acclaimed worthy to open the record, enforce His Kinsman right, and possess the dominion of earth, as man and for man.

The Record of a Redeemable Inheritance

Alienated estates under Theocratic rule were a matter of record. In each case, wherein a land ownership was transferred on account of a mortgage foreclosure, or debt, the record of the transaction was written upon two documents; one remained open, the other was sealed until the year of Jubilee. These deeds were held by the party foreclosing the estate. When the legal kinsman appeared, he was required to provide for all indebtedness involved. His kinship and ability to pay secured for him the right to receive the documents, break the seals and enforce possession in behalf of the kin, whose title had been forfeited.

It seems Scriptural and reasonable, therefore, to consider the "book" in the right hand of God as being fully explained by this ancient law in regard to Jewish estates.

A Redeemer Sought.

The foregoing conclusion is further strengthened by the challenge of the mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and break its seals? But no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or look into it" (Verses 2-3 W). Before the earth can be dispossessed of Satan, the usurping prince of darkness, one must be found whose lawful right it is to employ **authority, both executive and judicial**, to accomplish the end in view.

Satan is now the "god of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). He claims the kingdoms of this world (age), and our Lord does not dispute the claim (Matt. 4:9). Most believers recognize the fact that we are compelled to conflict "with the despotisms, the empires, **the forces that control and govern this dark world**—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in heavenly warfare" (Eph. 6:12).

The spirit of the age is quite contradictory to all this, in its teaching. It goes so far as to deny the existence of angels, good or bad. It claims evil exists only in the mind; Satan is the product of mortal error; there is no such person. His overthrow can mean no more than the casting down of vain imaginations. Satan's arrest and imprisonment are highly symbolic presentations of a time when he shall deceive the nations no more—that is, mortal mind shall have escaped the delusion of Satan's existence, as a child outgrows its early dreams of hobgoblins and satyrs.

But how differently God deals with this serious subject! His word teaches man is fallen, and earth is accursed, and controlled by a power formidable; a government of Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, and Powers. It further teaches the redemption of man by a price immeasurable and commensurate with human need, and a deliverance from this bondage **for the whole creation**.

Man is doing all his misguided mind can conceive to break God's claim; his continuation of empire is a perpetuation of the Godless civilization (?) of its founder and builder, Nebuchadnezzar. "Behold great Babylon, which I have builded" is an excellent monogram to inscribe upon modern idealism.

Nations are wrestling with personalities, principalities, and powers, of which they are willfully ignorant or arrogantly defiant. Only the delirium of frenzied madness; the overthrow of man's imperial sway, and the sudden awakening from his dream by judgment times, and the coming of a great Deliverer "out of Zion," will convince mankind that the Most High ruleth over all.

The time of deliverance is fast approaching. The scene before us is the formation of a government in secret. It is imperative that a Redeemer **appear** and do the part of a kinsman (Ruth 3:31).

The Challenge for a Redeemer.

"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man . . . was able to open the book or look therein" (Verses 2, 4).

When the full issue is understood by men and angels, the "would-be saviours of men are silenced. The voice of the mighty angelic representative of God penetrates the utmost and the innermost boundaries of the inhabited universe. That voice searched the dwelling place of God's heaven; and the earth, the abode of men, and underneath the earth to the lowest depths of hades, which is the prison of departed, unbelieving spirits—yea, wherever exists a rational being. **But no man was able to open the book or look into it**" (W). **Fallen man** is not worthy, for all our race is insolvent, morally and spiritually. Our case is something like that of Ruth's nearest kinsman, who said to Boaz: "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance; redeem thou my right to thyself, for I can not redeem it" (Ruth 4:6).

Unfallen angels cannot redeem, for they are not kinsmen according to the flesh, and are also subject to the law themselves. The requirement demands **moral qualifications, human identification, and sacrificial merit, or, absolute holiness, meritorious atonement, and sinless incarnation.**

No created being is equal to the occasion.

“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon” (Verse 4).

The grief of John can be explained only in view of the issues so deeply concerning the human family. Apparently these issues are in the balance. If the passing of sorrow and sin, and the emancipation of earth from the bondage of the curse and the power of Satan depends upon the opening of the seals of this book, his intense concern—“much weeping”—is fully accounted for. “John, a companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,” could not be otherwise than deeply distressed when the kingdom is about to be delivered unto the saints—but lo, the authorized One, whose right it is to open the seals, and place earth on a redemption basis, cannot be found.

What solemn testimony this scene affords of man’s moral helplessness! Well may the exponents of self-evolved salvation for man, society, and nations ponder and take heed.

A Redeemer Found.

The profound silence created by the angelic challenge at length is broken by one of the Elders, with a message of comfort for John: “Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Verse 5). At last One appears, whose right is unchallenged. Who is this Lion of Judah? Little did the dying Jacob know of the meaning of his prophetic vision, recorded in Genesis (49:9). But he foretold the coming of the Lion of Judah. These wonderful years we are now

entering will make clear the interpretation thereof. Christ is coming in irresistible might, the symbolic Lion as His heraldry, declaring His human birthright, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Judah; and signifying the royalty and the majesty of the kingly tribe. Our Lord sprang out of Judah. "And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, by no means the least honorable art thou among the princely places in Judah, for from thee shall come a Prince—One who shall be the Shepherd of My people Israel" (Matt. 2:5, 6 W).

He is also called the **Root of David**, indicating His Divine nature. Compare Rev. 21:16, where Jesus is designated the **Offspring of David**. As the Divine One, Christ appointed and established the Davidic throne of Israel. The kingdom of Israel stands unique among all nations; it is distinctive in its origin, perpetuation and destiny. Ordained of God, it is assured an age-long future, when other kingdoms have become as "the chaff of the summer threshing-floors."

Our Lord, in His humanity, as the Offspring of David, is heir to the governmental throne of David. Combining these titles we find, Christ is the **founder and the heir** of the Kingdom of Israel, which is to be an earthly manifestation of Divine government, when Christ shall reign from the river to the ends of the earth as the God-Man—the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The Redeeming Lamb of God.

It is said, Nero sprang a surprise upon the Roman populace one time, when thousands filled the galleries awaiting the execution of a company of martyrs. The little faithful band were in the arena. The doors were momentarily expected to open and the fierce Numidian lions spring upon their helpless prey. Great was the change of emotion and swift the revulsion of feeling when, instead, the keepers came forth leading a snow-white lamb. This shrewd surprise commended itself to the pleasure-seekers, and they cried for the release of the condemned Christians.

So John hastily looks, but no such character as a Lion can be seen; but he recognizes at once a new feature of interest, from henceforth to be the object of worship, wonder and admiration (Verses 6-7).

The identification of this Arnion (Gr. little lamb) is not difficult to confirm. The first introduction of Jesus to the multitudes in the wilderness by John the Baptist, was, "Behold the Lamb of God." Twenty-eight times reference is made in the Apocalypse to the Lamb. The types from Abel to Calvary point unerringly to Him who was "as a lamb brought to the slaughter" (Is. 53:7). He bears those marks still. The wound-prints John saw sixty years and more before, as the doubting Thomas was convinced, he now beholds once more. Christ's wounds are perpetual witnesses to His redemptive sacrifice. How these nail-prints are honored in heaven! They are the mementoes of Calvary. There is no reason to doubt the immortal body of Christ will never cease to disclose the cruel marks of the nails and the spear.

"Five bleeding wounds He bears,
Received on Calvary,
They pour effectual prayers
His blood avails for me."

Poetic license here suggests a theological difficulty. The elimination of the word "bleeding" leaves a true and touching statement of fact, since our Sacrifice shed His blood on Calvary, and presented it on the mercy-seat of the true Tabernacle.

The position of the Lamb is "standing" in the midst of the throne; that is, between the Jasper throne and the enthroned Elders.

When Christ ascended, He "sat down" (Eph. 1:20-21) on His Father's throne (Rev. 3:21), an act denoting accomplished sacrificial work. This position He will occupy until He shall arise to assume the Judicial throne. The present scene anticipates this manifestation of the throne, in which Christ is seen in the act of

vacating His position at the right hand of God, to take unto Himself His great power, and reign. The act of standing denotes the end of patient waiting; the beginning of judicial activity.

Seven-fold power and wisdom are symbolically described as seven horns and seven eyes, respectively. Horns are emblems of kingly power; the eyes are the seven Spirits of God. Seven denotes completeness. The Lamb is revealed as invested with fullest governmental authority and anointed with the Holy Spirit in the fullest measure. Prophets, Priests and Kings were anointed with oil, typically setting forth Divine Selection, Divine Commission, and Divine Enduement for the respective offices. Of Jesus, it is said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and forever, and the Sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a Sceptre of absolute justice. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness beyond Thy companions" (Heb. 1:8, 9).

This **seven-fold** anointing is described in Isaiah (11:2-3), "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him."

"Spirit of Wisdom"—Originality.

"And Understanding"—Discrimination.

"Of Counsel"—Perception.

"And Might"—Power.

"Of Knowledge"—Prophetic Foresight.

"And fear of the Lord"—Morality.

"And quick discernment"—Spiritual Intuition.

The Lamb takes the book. His rights are fully disclosed and demonstrated. What a three-fold combination! The majesty and might of the Lion; the meekness and weakness of the Sacrificial Lamb; the intelligence and power of the seven horns and seven eyes. Can we wonder that heaven echoes and re-echoes with a mighty burst of song? (Verses 8-10).

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The Song of Redemption.

The Singers; this chorus is made up of select ones. Angels may only listen and admire. **The Elders and the living ones sing**, and their song was never heard before—it is a **new** song. Only the redeemed of earth may join this chorus, and they are the first-fruit, the early gleanings of the harvest, before **the great tribulation period**; these are the overcomers, to whom the promise is verified, “I will deliver thee from the hour of the great tribulation.”

I am fully aware at this point we approach the battle ground of expositors. The historical interpreter would place **the rapture of the church** at a time between the sixth and seventh seals, when the tribulation saints—those made ready under the first series of judgments—are to be delivered out of the great Tribulation.

The chief argument in support of this assumption that chapter four does **not reveal the raptured church**, is the translation of the revised version, which renders the portion of Scripture under consideration, “because . . . and made **them** kings and priests, and **they** shall reign over the earth.” It is readily perceived, if this be a correct translation, the Elders and living ones are singing of **others**, who as yet **are to be** redeemed **from** the earth.

In answer, there are so many reasons to the contrary, that a careful examination leads us to reject this claim unhesitatingly and positively.

1. There are some old manuscripts that do contain the pronouns **them** and **they**. The rendering of the Authorized Version is **us** and **we**.

Of course, both parties contend the weight of **scholarship** is with their side. Little advantage, therefore, can be gained by quoting “authorities.” If we can show, first, that there is equal scholarship in favor of the authorized translation, we begin the case on equal footing. On this point I quote Seiss: “Some of the best manuscripts read ‘them,’ in place of ‘us’; but the **sense is not altered by it**, or by reading ‘they,’ as some

manuscripts do in the next clause, instead of 'we,' **for the subject is settled** by the preceding declaration to be the persons uttering the song, namely, by the phrase 'redeemed us'; **the genuineness of which must be considered established**, since the discovery of the Codex Synacticus" (The Apocalypse, Vol. 1, pg. 264).

2. The preceding chapter on the Cherubim, we are satisfied, proved the "living ones" symbolize the glory of the redeemed of earth at the time the government is in transition.

3. The Elders are men, and they could not have access to this glorious circle unless they were redeemed. To describe them as disembodied spirits would be anticipating the day of rewards.

4. The Elders and "living ones" each have harps, and all sing the same song, identifying them as one order of beings, and revealing the priestly and royal glories of the redeemed, respectively.

5. If the Elders are not redeemed men, who are they? and what right have angels, or archangels, or any other order, to sing about redemption? How can they sing **anticipatively**, as some urge, of a theme they have ever desired to look into?

6. The angels are seen to be a distinctive class (Verses 11-12). Their ascription of praise to the glory and power of the Lamb constitutes a proclamation, of which the Slain Lamb is worthy, and in which every creature in creation may rightly join, but of the song of redeeming love, it can truly be said, there is such a thing as angelic incompetency. The song of Redemption utterly defies and overmasters the unfallen spirits of heaven. But all may acclaim His right to rule, and all may exclaim:

"To Him who is seated on the throne,
And to the Lamb,
Be ascribed all blessing and honour,
And glory and might
Until the ages of the ages."

CHAPTER VII.

A VISION OF THE SEALS.

Unveiling the Secret Seals in Succession; the Symbolic Horsemen in Procession; the Sacrificial Martyrs in Intercession; and the Signs of Nature in Recession. Rev. 6.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, ‘Come and see.’ And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:1-2).

The prophetic vista now opens amid **scenes of Judgment**. The new order of government, namely, Christ the anointed God-Man, and associated with Him, redeemed man; the placing of a judgment throne; the investiture of Christ with fullest authority; the unanimous acclamation of all the glorified saints, and angels; the presentation of the sealed book by the Father; manifest the preparedness and authorization of our Lord to proceed at once in the enforcement of His Redemptive rights. There will be no further delay. The seals will now be opened.

It is of utmost importance to ascertain the **nature** and **design** of these seven seals. There are seven, because the number indicates **complete judgment**. They will be opened **successively**. The **effects** of one may extend into the time of the succeeding seal, but none are opened contemporaneously.

As to **character**, they are **judgment displays**. Just why anyone can interpret any of the seals as an act of grace absolute, we fail to see. Grace **at intervals** will be exhibited, as in the instance of the sealing of 144,000 of Israel, but the several gracious exhibitions

of similar character are disclosed during the **suspension** of successive judgments. When the continuity of the unfolding judgment is interrupted by a revelation of grace, such description is parenthetical; that is, details are introduced apart from the course of judgment. Such a pause and parenthesis is contained in the seventh chapter, between the sixth and seventh seals. We must conclude the actual **display** and **effect** of the seven Seals, seven Trumpets and seven Vials, are **judicial**, and that any **Sovereign expression of Grace** is not a part of any of these judgments, but an intervention.

These considerations will answer the forced attempt to harmonize past wars, famines, etc., with the predicted woes of the Seals. How can the Seals be opened, while Christ sits as Mediator on His Father's Throne? How can He assume Redemptive rights as our Kinsman, until the time of the world's emancipation is near? How can He judge the nations on a redemption basis, until the saints who sit with Him in judgment are enthroned?

By the same process of reasoning, we reject the oft-repeated comparison of the White Horse, as indicative of the progress of the Gospel.

With utmost earnestness, the readers are urged to recognize these essential facts to intelligent and harmonious interpretation. The Seals cannot be opened until a new governmental basis is established in the heavens. Jesus will not act as the Lion of Judah until Israel is about to receive His special intervention. The public introduction of Christ in the midst of the heavenly hosts as the Lion of Judah denotes the assumption of Kingly prerogative. Henceforth, the activities of the Jasper Throne will be instigated and directed by Christ, and the redeemed will co-operate in these judicial administrations.

Let us now follow the awesome events, as they proceed.

The First Seal—A World Conquest.

Three agencies are employed in the execution of the coming judgments on the earth:

1. **The Lamb**—whose right it is, by virtue of Redemption, to open the Seals. The first, He now opens.

2. **The Redeemed**—who act in support of His decrees. It is one of the Elders who cries, as in a voice of thunder, "Come!" The call is intended for the various horsemen.

3. **The Human Instrumentalities.** The horses are symbols of power. Power is difficult to portray. As an ancient emblem, the horse, swift and strong, was the most suggestive living embodiment of **directed** power. Each horse has a rider, indicating organized leadership. The horse and rider denote aggressive and irresistible force.

Christ will use the wrath of man to praise Him in judgment times. Not one of these human agencies can fulfill their appointed tasks until they are summoned to do so. That summons comes through the saints, as the executives of the throne.

A White Horse and a nameless rider are the first response to the loud call from the throne. Who is this mysterious rider? Many have alleged it is Christ. But He it cannot be. He is not due to appear until in the days of the Seventh trumpet. True, He will be revealed, as John subsequently witnesses, and thus describes:

"Behold I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True" (Rev. 19:11).

The words "and see," which appear in verse 1, are omitted in the Revised Version. The summons is not to John, as he is in heaven. It must be to the riders of these symbolic horses.

Compare the White Horse and rider of Rev. 6:2 and the resembling horse and rider of Rev. 19:11.

The first is a counterfeit of the second. They resemble one another in the symbolic imagery of power, but they differ most widely in other respects.

The first has a bow, a long-range weapon, indicating a peaceable conquest. The second has a "sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations" (Rev. 19:15). The first is unnamed; the second is called Faithful and True. The former moves in a deliberate, aggressive campaign, "conquering and to conquer," while the latter deals in swift and awful judgment, "treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

The identity of the second as Christ at His Revelation, after the "Great Tribulation," is complete; but it is impossible to make the first, who appears several years previous to this glorious Epiphany of Christ, coincide. Nor is it possible to honestly construe this emblematic march of conquest as typical of the progress of the **Gospel**. We are dealing with a **judgment** situation. It is needless to say the Gospel is not a messenger of judgment, but of grace.

(Christ comes from **heaven**.) The rider with the bow emerges from some part of the **earth**, because earth is the scene whence the summons, "Come," is directed.

This is undoubtedly a scene of coming conquest, when some brilliant, strategical and irresistible conqueror will dazzle the world with a series of victories, won without much shedding of blood. Such a conqueror is to appear and assume control of the consolidated broken fragments of the old Roman Empire, and give power to ten kings for a brief season. While his triumphs at first are due to his skillful diplomacy, we are not to infer the scene is not one of chastisement, for the second seal, with its attending disasters, is a result, most likely, of the first.

"A crown was given unto him." Christ will wear many diadems at the time of His triumphal return. This solitary crown will be worn by one who on account of great achievements, is so honored that he is

encouraged to go forth on the rising tides of popularity, gaining victory upon victory, until he becomes the idol of the coming days.

Does this scene not describe the rise of the great Emperor—the Idol Shepherd—whose early years will be so thoroughly diplomatic, that even a portion of Israel will eventually hail him as their Deliverer?

The world in these war times is looking for just such a man. Is he now living? Will the war in Europe call forth his diplomatic genius?

If this is not the conqueror later to be revealed as the "man of sin," it assuredly presents a great leader, who will secure a temporary peace at little expense, but it will be brief-lived. For,

The Second Seal—Universal War,

is next in order.

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, 'Come and see.' And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword." (Rev. 6:3-4).

This touches a very timely and interesting question: Are we living in the days of the second seal? While much has been said to counteract this view in these pages, the question is so important, we still would press the argument further.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Olivet address, made a statement that reflects light on the present discussion; "and ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, **but the end is not yet.**" This is His reply to the three-fold question, "When shall these things be?" (the signs and overthrow of Jerusalem and the Temple); "what shall be the sign of Thy coming?" (the second advent), "and the end of the world?" (end of the age, Greek *aionos*—age) (Matt. 24:1-6).

For the sake of simplicity, let us agree that the substance of Christ's reply, including so far as the sixth

verse, referred to the immediate future, that shortly from the time He addressed His disciples, terrible signs and events would trouble Judea, marking the overthrow of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, we must admit that a similar order of events will precede the close of this age, for Christ answers the questions inclusively and comprehensively.

Wars and rumors of war would culminate in the judgment upon the Jews, but by the words, "the end is not yet," is indicated an interval (how long is still a secret) would intervene ere a **repetition on a large scale**, resulting in the close of the church age and the coming of Christ. And, further, it must not be overlooked a more extensive war spirit would actively show itself, "for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom," and that such a universal war would concern the Jews and the Holy City, for the setting of this chapter is distinctly Jewish. Even this is described as "the beginning of sorrows." In the same sermon Jesus mentioned another conflict at the time the abomination predicted by Daniel, is to be seen standing in the Holy Place. This refers to the "Man of Sin" in his first onslaught against Israel (Matt. 24:18-20).

We therefore positively conclude the present war of the Dual Monarchies and Turkey against the allied forces of the Triple Entente, Japan and Servia, **is not the end of war.**

The prediction of Christ, "for nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom," evidently corresponds to the opening of the Second Seal. Compare the order; Christ said: Wars, famines, pestilences.

John wrote: Seal two, war; Seal three, famine; Seal four, pestilence.

Add to this the following summary of reasons, and it would seem impossible to accept the theory of the present time coinciding with the days of the Second Seal.

(1) **The Seals secure the book of Divine right to reign on the earth.** (Rev. 5:1.)

(2) **The "book" must be delivered to Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in the presence of the Redeemed, who are yet to be translated into the presence of the Lord, at His appearing, and acclaim His elevation to Kingship, in a chorus like this:** "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation." (Rev. 5:9.)

(3) **The Seals cannot be broken until the body of Christ is glorified.**

(4) **Christ will not open the seals until earth is ready to be dealt with on a Redemption basis; a redemption basis includes a redeemed people who are with Him to receive their recovered rights.** A fact many seem to lose sight of is that Christ's work of judging the world is to be accomplished in **fellowship with His glorified church.** "Know ye not the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6:2.) Have we forgotten that judgment **begins at the house of God,** and that all believers must appear before the judgment seat of Christ before the judgment of the world begins?

(5) **The Seals will be broken in consecutive order. The first shall be first.**

(6) **A peaceful campaign under the first seal precedes the procession of the Red Horse.** Have the White Horse and his rider, who is a counterfeit of Christ on the White Horse, coming according to the first Seal, appeared?

We are better prepared to admit the conditions are sufficient for universal war sooner or later. Men's passions are no less brutal today than in ages past. War, as it is now, is deplorable. What will it be when all law and order and civic authority are overthrown?

The Third Seal—Worldwide Famine.

31

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, 'Come and see.' And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, 'A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine'" (Rev. 6:5-6).

Famine will stalk in the wake of international wars. Fields depleted of the sowers and reapers to fill the insatiable maw of militarism will lie perhaps unsown—assuredly unreaped. The Black Horse carries his coat of arms—a balance. The very necessities of life are to be doled out by weight. A day's pay (a laborer's pay is a denarius) for a choenix of barley, equivalent to less than a quart—about rations sufficient for one—what about his family? God receives little acknowledgment for our rich harvests; how can the world learn whence comes the bountiful rain and the golden grain?

There is one limitation restraining the Grim Rider of the Black Horse, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine." This is the very irony of Judgment. The luxuries which twentieth century civilization cherishes, are unharmed. The olive will yield her fruit, and also the vine, but who can be satisfied with those, when the very "staff of life" is sold at the famine price, which according to the scale affixed by the throne is flour at \$50 to \$75 per barrel? May this not be a judgment stroke upon the advancing waves of socialism? This famine by its very predicted nature must first affect labor, as the luxuries are beyond their reach.

The portentous shadow of modern times is the struggle of class against class; the effort of the servant to be equal to his employer; the demand for a division of capital; the equalization of capital and labor. While God sanctions all honest endeavor to rise in point of usefulness and betterment of condition in society, can He do other than frown upon the break-

ing down of law, and the spirit of contempt everywhere prevailing against all authority? God will deal definitely and effectively with the rich and mighty under the sixth seal, but it can scarcely escape our notice—His distinct punishment against a lawless confederation of the wage earners, resulting in the overthrow of all civic power.

The Fourth Seal—Grim Death's Harvest

32 "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, 'Come and see.' And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:7-8).

The rider of the fourth—the pale or green—horse is named Death. In our notes on Chapter one, death was described as a personality; also Hades. Christ holds the keys of death and of Hades, so they are restricted in execution. A wider range, for a season, is permitted this Grim Reaper, who cuts down living men in billowy heaps; no doubt the preceding famine state is now a raging pestilence. The eighth verse clearly associates the four seals as contributive to this holocaust of death. "And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth to kill with sword and with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." This last clause seems to include an uprising of the brute creation, which would be a necessary sequel of famine conditions. The powers of Hades are the harvesters. Inasmuch as Hades is abolished as the place of departed spirits of the righteous, it is to be inferred the **lost** spirits of the **wicked** are victims of him who has control in the underworld. How painful is this subject! After centuries of gospel proclamation, a harvest of many, many millions of souls, whose redemption was bought, but who would not accept the Redeemer or respond to His claims.

The judgments thus far have smitten one-fourth of the human race. Terrible as they are in character, these agents have been directed from the throne. **The "power was given to him," death.** God's dear Son still holds the reins of power, and although these afflictions and chastisements are beyond our capacity to understand, we are confident His purpose is benign and beneficent. That many shall learn righteousness, while God's judgments are in the earth, will appear in the vision of

The Fifth Seal—A Great Martyrdom.

Among the portents of these sad times of reckoning Jesus spoke of the outcome of these preliminary judgments as the **"beginning of sorrows."** We have not, so far, entered the climacteric three and one-half years, known as the time of Jacob's trouble. Ere this unparalleled season of sorrow engulfs the world the fifth seal opens, letting loose from its meshes the wrath of a godless age against the righteous who are on earth after the rapture of the watchful saints. Some of the subjects of this siege of persecution will be those who were not accounted worthy to escape at the rapture. In spite of frequent warnings and wooings of the Spirit, in spite of the sevenfold reward promised the overcomer, multiplied thousands of nominal professors and world-controlled believers will be unprepared for the sudden summons into the Lord's presence, when He shall come for His saints. Of course this is objected to on the ground that all believers are members of Christ's body, and He cannot have a **mutilated body.**

In answer let this question be asked: Does death, which now separates the militant host of believers and the triumphant ranks of glorified spirits of just men, **"mutilate"** the body of Christ?

Do we question the perfect **abiding** of all believers? Does not Jesus say—"If a man **abide** not in me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. And **men** gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are

burned" (John 15:6). Notice it does not say He (the vine), or the Husbandman, cast the severed branches into the fire, but **men**. Between the alternatives of utter, eternal loss, and the fires of judgment, as the only interpretations conceivable, it seems Scriptural to choose the latter. If the Corinthian church was warned, and chastened lest they be judged with the **world** (1 Cor. 11:32), it seems there is a possibility of being found deserving of chastening in the judgment times.

A very trying time awaits the fruitless and unfaithful. Our Lord declared concerning the days of the fifth seal, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matt. 24:9). This world-wide persecution follows "the beginning of sorrows." It is an idle attempt to confine this prediction exclusively to the past.

It is quite probable the future witnesses, consisting both of the "unprofitable servants," and many who learn righteousness in the times of judgment, will incur the wrath of the nations, being regarded as the **cause** of the overwhelming calamities. These witnesses will declare the **greater wrath still to come**, infuriating the populace more and more. There will be no compromise with the world in these times. The **cost** of faith in Christ will be too great—the **message** will be the coming of the King and Kingdom. The Gospel of the Kingdom, which differs from the Gospel of Grace, will be the burden of the preaching and intercession. The Gospel of Grace, our present message, deals with the calling out of a people for His (Christ's) name's sake, who are chosen, elect and sanctified; being formed into a body, which, united to Christ now in the Spirit, and at the rapture to be more closely united by the marriage bond, will return with Him at His Revelation. When this Bride is prepared, and received into the New Jerusalem, her eternal home, a new message, and yet an old one, will be carried throughout the world, with remarkable celerity. Ac-

according to Christ, "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, as a **witness** to all nations, then shall the end of the age come" (Matt. 24:14). The preaching will be the **very message** of John the Baptist." "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This is the essence of the "Gospel of the Kingdom." With the knowledge of a translated church as already accomplished, there will be no uncertain sound proceeding from the lips of these brave witnesses to Christ and His word of prophecy in these times, when any moment they are expecting to seal their testimony in their blood.

The result of this terrible persecution is disclosed under the fifth seal. The scene of their cruel suffering is graciously hidden, but in heaven their victorious spirits are seen **under the altar**. "And when I had opened the fifth seal I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).

Under the altar, as already slain, for at the base of the altar and beneath, the blood was poured out (Lev. 4:7). The painful martyrdom is over. The spirits of the faithful witnesses to the "Word of God" are a sacrifice completed. As yet their bodies are not resurrected.

In this solemn scene the doctrine of soul sleeping—conditional immortality—receives a serious rebuke. These are spirits, disembodied, but under the altar of the true tabernacle in heaven—not yet possessing a full reward, but living.

They are praying. Not the prayer of the dying Saviour, or the expiring Stephen, "Father, forgive them," but for vengeance. Truly they are the harvest of a subsequent ministration of the Gospel. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

How any writer can accommodate this prayer to a past or present application is hard to explain. Our

faithful martyrs of the past have left a record of prayer for mercy on their enemies, and we dare not pray for vengeance in these times of **grace**.

The answer to the prayer is delayed until a further guilt is incurred by the sacrifice of other "fellow servants also, and their brethren" (verse 11), but the prayer is **heard**, and its answer will appear in a subsequent chapter.

There can be no reference here to the **church** martyrs of the early centuries, for they shall have had part in the first installment of the first resurrection—no doubt included among those "that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

These **pre-tribulation** martyrs under the fifth seal do not receive a full reward until another company of martyrs shall join them, but they are given rest. They are accepted sacrifices—the white robes declare they have been made righteous and pledge their vindication at a subsequent time, when other servants of the Lord shall be put to death for the refusal to worship the "beast and his image."

The Sixth Seal—A Cataclysm of Woe

35
"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?' " (Rev. 6:12-17).

This seal marks a most significant crisis in the panorama of **accelerating, expanding and intensifying** woes. It brings to view the premonitory signs of the coming of the Son of Man; "Immediately after the

tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in Heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24:29-30).

The whole situation is one of total collapse. The powers of Nature are shaking; a great earthquake, unprecedented, convulses the land, the sea and the heavens. Majestic and terrifying as was Nature's warning of seismic shock, quaking mountains, and flame and fire, and smoke, when the law was **given**, yet in the day when a **broken** law is judged, it is declared, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that I will shake not only the earth **but also the heavens.**" **The sun will enshroud itself** and darkness reign supreme. Men may try to discredit, and assert these things as unscientific, but God holds stars and systems in the hollow of His hands. There was darkness that could be felt over the land of Egypt. There was darkness when the sun was draped in mourning at the crucifixion of our Lord. The **how** is not needful to know. It is a question of fact. Have we not learned what God says in prophecy is as certain as facts in history? Added to the horror of darkness is the sanguinary appearance of the moon. Like a hideous spectre, it haunts this world, steeped in night's gloom, **apparently** bathed in blood—a portent of carnage to follow—a reminder of all the innocent blood of saints so foully shed.

Fear and consternation seize upon every class and order of society. Back of all this phenomena in Nature, there is an even worse calamity. These **actualities** coming, no doubt carry a symbolic meaning also; they portend the overthrow of all society; the breaking up of social order; the letting loose of unrestrained lawlessness; the revolution of all governments. Indeed, the dissolution of all things seems to have come.

Kings, mighty men, capitalists—the magnates of the earth are frantic, distracted, desperate—they **pray**. However much they questioned the efficacy of prayer before, or in whatever manner they ridiculed its power in palmier days, **they pray now**, but also, it is a lamentable outcry to rocks and mountains to fall upon them. Why? **The sign of the Son of man has appeared**. What is the **sign**? Evidently the heavens have opened for a brief space, and they have gazed upon the **face of the enthroned Lamb**. Much controversy has arisen over the “sign of the Son of man.” The cry of the fear-stricken hosts of these chaotic times seems to answer, as they shriek, “Hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.” It will be some years before Christ comes down to earth, after this scene, but an anticipative revelation of His face in anger evidently appears “in heaven.” “The great day of His wrath is come,” they exclaim, but not yet. They **assume** this from the awful conditions around them, and more especially from the terrifying glimpse of the throne of judgment. The great day of the Lamb’s wrath is still future. When that day comes, they will no longer **fear** Him, but take an organized stand **against** Him, in a place called Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

The results of **this woe** equally affect all classes. The seven ranks of society are all included; kingly, influential, wealthy, military, princely, mediocre and peasant.

God grant our escape from these perilous times, and that we may be adjudged worthy to **sit** in His presence **before** His wrath is kindled but a little. **To see His face**, is the prayer of the devout heart, now and evermore. On the contrary, what a prayer these demoralized worldlings offer—to **be hid from His face**.

Who may abide the day of His coming and who shall stand when He appeareth? (Mal. 3:2.) The Scriptures are fulfilled. The unbelieving raise this very interrogation—“Who shall be able to stand?”

The glorified church is seen **sitting** in His presence; the tribulation saints will be seen **standing** before Him, but also "the ungodly are not so"—they shall not stand in the day of judgment—"but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1:4-5).

This establishes the status of all classes in relation to the throne.

"Nations wane, though proud and stately,
Christ His kingdom hasteneth greatly,
Earth her latest pangs is summing,
Shout, ye saints, your Lord is coming."

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIONS OF GRACE.

Including: **An Intervention of God, on Account of a Gracious Relation; A Selection from Israel, in View of Judgment Anticipation; The Benediction of Christ, as Reward for deepest Humiliation.—Rev. VII.**

How beautiful the provisions of grace appear against the black storm clouds just passed! The raging tempest of woes is stilled and there is a great calm. A short reprieve is granted, while the gracious Lord remembers His **chosen people, Israel**. Full many a cycle of centuries have run their course, while the twelve tribes of Jacob have been scattered among the nations, without a city, a temple, a priest or an altar. It was destined to be so. Paul reminds us that "blindness (hardness) in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." The visitation of God among the Gentiles has, at the time of the vision, prepared a people for His name's sake, whom He has removed from earth and seated with Christ on His throne.

The filling up of Gentile election is accomplished, although the "time of the Gentiles" must run a little longer. This suspension of further judgment marks a special **dispensation of grace** toward Israel. Henceforth an **official church** as God's witness is neither seen nor mentioned, on earth, while judgments are pronounced.

As stated in our previous chapter it is the time of the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and its promulgation will be largely committed to witnesses of the Hebrew race.

We must, however, not infer that grace will not be exhibited longer to the Gentiles, but rather there is a recommitment of the **oracles** of God to Israel. These assertions are confirmed by **two visions** set forth in the seventh chapter; from verse one to eight, **Israel** is brought to the front, and from verse nine to seventeen, the **Gentiles** are seen in remembrance. The two visions constitute one complete whole, revealing God's mercy, and His triumphs of grace in the midst of the apostasy of nominal Christendom, and anticipating the rise of the power of the Anti-christ, whose supremacy over the nations, nationally and ecclesiastically, will soon reach its zenith, and from the hour of universal power, he will hold **unlimited** sway for a period of three and one-half years.

The Vision as Concerns Israel.

But what a parenthesis of **grace** intervenes! God has promised the nations shall learn righteousness when His **judgments** are in the earth. The **pause** here gives space for the accomplishment of **Joel's** prophecy. Pentecost was the **Partial Fulfillment** of the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We are confident the complete fulfillment takes place between the **sixth and seventh seals**.

Let Joel speak: "And it shall come to pass **afterward** (that is, after the former rain), that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon my servants and upon the handmaids in those days, will I pour out my Spirit."

What days? "And I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, **blood and fire and pillars of smoke**. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord shall come" (Joel 2:27-31).

The signs of the **sixth Seal** are exactly portrayed here. These wonders are in **connection** with this great

outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel. Furthermore, all this precedes the **great and terrible day of God**. It is usually thought this great turning to God is a Millennial blessing.

We leave it to the reader to judge. The language is unmistakable. There is a **great revival** in the **midst of the judgments**. This accounts for the sealing of 144,000 of the twelve tribes. It explains whence came the great and innumerable company who came up out of the great tribulation, before the **Anti-christ is revealed**. He is in the world making conquests, but not revealed until after the rapture of the glorious company made up of every nation, tribe and people. The sealing of Israel by the Holy Spirit is in **anticipation** of the three and one-half years of Israel's great distress. It is at this time the Holy Spirit, the great Hinderer, is withdrawn, that Anti-christ should be **manifested**, as he will be—**Satan's Man**.

In point of time the **sealing** follows the cessation of judgment. The great **tribulation has begun**. The entire period of Seals, Trumpets and Vials—Judgments, is **embraced in the great tribulation**.

The latter three years and one-half constitute the **great distress of Israel**, and will be more violent in character than the days of the seals, nevertheless if the period of the first series of judgment recorded in chapter six is not a season of tribulation, what can it be called?

These victors come out; that is, they are a **product** of the tribulation. They do not pass through, but they are seen as **outcomers**. They must necessarily be **in**, in order to **come out**. Inasmuch as chapter seven discloses Sovereign grace working in behalf of God's chosen nation, it would be expected to have some light shed upon **God's grace among the nations**, for all the judgments are **corrective** in purpose, rather than **retributive**. The Holy Spirit will work in these trying times.

While this work of grace is being enacted,

The Course of Judgment is Arrested.

“And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree” (Rev. 7:1).

The arena of action is the whole earth. “Four” is the number of universality. Israel is embraced—the two houses, Judah and Ephraim; the twelve tribes are included. They are at present scattered in all parts of the earth. Isaiah mentions the “four corners,” “the Lord shall assemble the outcast of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the **four corners of the earth.**” The field of action is surely the earth.

The winds held in abeyance. Four angels are presented, holding in check the forces of evil. Governments are controlled outside the legislative halls, and executive seats of earth. A dominating **spirit of evil** exercises tremendous power over official affairs, as well as the conduct of private individuals. The times before us are largely influenced by these hosts of wicked spirits, whose realm is in the atmospheric heavens. In relation to the **seals**, these forces are **permitted** to exercise a **circumscribed liberty**. A reference to Daniel’s intercepted prayer sheds light upon these solemn considerations.

Daniel’s prayer, continuing through twenty-one days, concerned the restoration of Israel. Two world powers were deeply affected by said restoration. The surprising intelligence is brought to the prophet, by an angel, that his prayer was heard the very day he set his face to intercede for his people, but the “Prince of Persia,” a prince of Satan, intercepted the answer he, as God’s messenger, was bringing, and he was detained until Michael, the archangel, who always stands in defense of Israel, came to his assistance (Dan. 10:1-13). The conflict inevitably was one of

spiritual character. *As Greece at that time was not a world power, there can be reference to no opposition by natural forces. The conclusion unavoidable is that earthly empires have their higher courts in the domain of the "prince of the power of the air." And that these delegated representatives are even more concerned, than are men, as to the progress of human government.

In simple words, every government has its higher authority, in princes appointed by the spirit now ruling in the hearts of the children of disobedience. God has principalities and powers too, who resist these wicked spirits. **Four of His trusted angelic guardians** are here introduced, and are seen holding in check the anarchistic designs of the powers of darkness.

The winds denote an agitated condition of society. Political disturbances are compared to "strong winds" (Dan. 7:2) (Jer. 49:36). The effect is a lull in the storm of national turmoil.

It is interesting to note angelic interposition in behalf of Israel in the last days, as was so often the case in the days of old.

The Angel With the Seal.

"And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads'" (Rev. 7:2-3).

The winds are said to be the instruments of destruction in verse one, but here the four angels are addressed as the destroying agents. There is no contradiction. God's spiritual forces **direct** the instruments of judgment, although they be satanically inspired. He ever maketh the wrath of men to praise Him!

*The Angel informed Daniel he must return to fight against the Prince of Grecia.

"Another angel." This may have reference to Michael, whom we cannot admit to be Christ, but an archangel whose official honor it is to stand in defense of Israel (Dan. 12:1). There are angels and there are archangels. It is sufficient to recognize the system and perfection of God's government.

The seal of the living God is not described. That it stands in contrast with the "mark of the beast," soon to brand the members of the Anti-christ confederation, there is little reason to doubt. God has never been without a witness on earth. These "bondmen of our God" selected from the tribes of Israel, will be invulnerable until their ministry is finished. The seal will be a public espousal of the testimony of God, and a confession to all who see it. It renders immunity from death to those who bear it.

The Sealing of Israel

"And I heard the number of them which were sealed; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand" (Rev. 7:4-8).

However much emphasis may be laid on the number, it is quite impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to this 144,000. Is this sum exact or symbolic? There is this assured, the election is precise and fixed and computed multiples of twelve. This certainly gives an **administrative** significance. Considering the twelve tribes, twelve stones in the priest's ephod, twelve loaves, etc., earthly rule is evidently

implied. This special company will appear again in chapter fourteen, where their noble character is fully exhibited.

They are **Israelites**, not Anglo-Saxons. They are of Israel according to the flesh and not a mystical, spiritual Israel. If words have any reliable use in holy inspiration, a child would infer **the twelve literal tribes are spoken of** as furnishing their equal quota to this favored company. It is pure waste of time to apply this election to the **Bride** of Christ. Christ's Bride has a **heavenly calling**, and already we have seen the Church, which is now **espoused** unto Christ, with her Lord enthroned and co-operating in judgment. No, this is the great act of God toward Israel's full restoration and shows His election from among the sons of Jacob, to **bear rule on earth**.

Two striking omissions are to be noted in the enumeration of the tribes. Jacob had thirteen sons in all. Levi is seldom reckoned, because his descendants were consecrated to the priesthood and their inheritance was the Lord. In the tribes from which the sealed are chosen, **Levi is specified, while Dan is omitted; also, Joseph, the father of Ephraim, takes precedence over his elder son.** In Moses' injunction to obedience (Deut. 29:17-21), Israel is entreated as follows, "**Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord, our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations. . . . The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.**" **As Dan and Ephraim** were foremost in idolatry, the erasure of their names is explained. Yet Dan finds inheritance in the division of Canaan, during the millennial age (Ez. 48:2); and Ephraim again is made mention of as finding a portion in his own name.

What a time men have in attempting to locate the "lost tribes." One consoling fact to be remembered

is, they are not **lost to Him**. "I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth" (Is. 43:6).

In the valley of vision the dry bones shall live again; scattered, bleached and very dry as they are, God knows they can and will live again. Ephraim and Judah, the two sticks, will be joined together—two kingdoms shall become one and one king shall be over them (Ez. 37).

God will find them in His time, but the re-ingrafting of Israel will prove of great benefit to the Gentile world, for the sealed ones of Israel will not bear witness in vain.

"After this, I beheld and, lo, a great multitude . . . stood before the throne, and before the Lamb" (verse 9).

The Vision as Concerns the Gentiles.

The former vision disclosed a specific and definite number sealed; the latter presents an innumerable and incomprehensible host in multitude. They are truly a **representative** class, made up of "all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues." But **who are they and whence came they?** These are the questions of the amazed seer; his **bewilderment** gives evidence of the introduction of an additional class of redeemed ones, unaccounted for as yet. They cannot be of the first fruits, who have been delivered from the time of the great tribulation.

The **overcomers of the church age are familiar** now to the beloved apostle. Even we who read can surely see the contrast, as the two hosts are compared. The overcomers of the church age are a royal kingdom of priests, **destined to rule**, and are already **enthroned**. Their presence is in evidence here as the Elders, apart from the great multitude, so lately presented before the throne.

The new company being introduced wear no crowns, but bear palms—emblems of victory—for they are the outcomers of the great tribulation. They **stand** in the presence of the Lamb, while the Elders and living ones are **seated**, constituting the executive power in association with the Lamb. The songs they sing too, distinguish their sphere of glory. The first sing, “Thou hast redeemed us . . . and we shall reign over the earth” (Rev. 5:9-10)—a song of salvation and sovereignty. The second sing, “Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb” (Rev. 7-10)—a song of **salvation** alone. They also occupy different spheres of service. The former sit with Christ in judgment and **reign**; the latter **serve** Him continually in the temple.

There seems no existing reason to **confuse** these two congregations of the redeemed. They are exalted to widely different honors and at distinctly different times.

There is just as little foundation to confuse the numberless multitude with the **specified, sealed number** of the twelve tribes. The one is a Gentile constituency made up of every nation; the other, exclusively an elect body of Israelites.

The Elders’ question, “Who are these?” implies a mystery. To which the reply is the familiar and courteous reply often noted in Scripture, where the question cannot be answered, “Thou knowest.” John’s ignorance seems an unanswerable argument in favor of the “tribulation saints,” being considered a distinguished host of redeemed introduced for the first time. If these considerations are correct, then the place of the rapture at the coming of the Bridegroom cannot be **after the sixth seal**, as some contend. It also does away with the claim in favor of its entire body of believers undergoing the tribulation.

The more we study this book by itself and in the light of other Scripture, the more we are confirmed in the convictions:

(1) The watchful saints are delivered in advance of the judgment period.

(2) The seals of judgment are all unbroken, until after the Rapture.

We hold to these views as **principles**. The overcomers of the church lose all hope and consolation in a theory of **tribulation** for the vigilant saints. The comfort of the blessed hope is a deliverance like Enoch's before the judgment. And further, the doctrine of the **imminency** of Christ's coming stands or falls here. Are we to look for breaking seals, war steeds, ghastly famine and heavenly portents, or for the coming of Jesus? It need not be pointed out, if we are to await the tread of white horsemen and the sealing of Israel, we cannot keep our eyes on the "Morning Star," but are compelled to look for anything else.

We are hopeful these words may turn our eyes toward the heavens from whence we look for the Saviour, who so loveth His espoused He cannot permit her to be exposed to the judgment times.

Tribulation Outcomers.

This company then is a body of Gentile believers living in the early part of the great tribulation, although they will no doubt be delivered before the seventh seal is opened. They are saved ones; they sing with joy and assurance; they are the purchase of redeeming love and the redeeming blood—the gracious harvest reaped amid scenes of direst woe, and whose testimony cost them all they held dear. They are blood-washed ones. Grace will co-mingle in these times. This accounts for the **protracted** nature of judgments. God does not love to see the world suffer. Some may inquire, why not bring all to swift and complete issue? Because **grace** rainbows that Jasper throne. He deals in covenant relation. He must remember the covenant made with Noah—never, to destroy all flesh. He must keep His covenant with Abraham to bring his seed into the land. He must remember the new

covenant sealed by Christ's blood; hence, every judgment is executed in view of the fulfillment of covenant obligations.

Men are incorrigible as a whole, but remnants are saved from time to time. The Raptured church leaves a remnant of unfaithful, who respond eventually to discipline. Israel after **her** fiery baptism will yield one-third of her household, who shall respond to redeeming love. The heathen nations, who have had comparatively few gospel privileges, will receive the "Gospel of the Kingdom" in its rapid promulgation. And no doubt largely from these quarters will come the great harvest during these days before the Trumpets. There is but one access to the Father in this or any other age. Of the outcomers in this chapter, it is said, they "have washed their robes and made them **white in the blood of the Lamb**; therefore, are they before the throne of God" (Rev. 7:14-15).

The Reward of Faithful Testimony.

The hope of the **church** calling is a high one. So Paul designated in his Philippian Epistle. "This one thing I do . . . I press toward the mark for the **prize of the high calling** of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14) This future glory, this gracious inheritance of God in the saints, has been fully revealed in the company of Elders and living ones, who are present with the Lamb, enthroned and crowned.

The **early tribulation** saints, martyred under the **fifth seal**, are fully accounted for, having been seen "under the altar," and assured of rest until a greater harvest of their brethren has been reaped by the cruel hand of persecution unto death.

The third company, which is dealt with in the seventh chapter, the **tribulation outcomers**, are now in view; we listen with interest to the characteristic reward awaiting them. Their estate at the time of the vision is briefly described thus: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night" (Rev. 7:15-17).

The adaptation of rewards according to service, is one of the very interesting features of Holy Writ. The sphere of these tried ones will be in fullest recognition of their especially trying probation, during the time of the world's supreme test.

The church overcomers, during the dispensation of grace, are assured they shall **shepherdize the nations** (Rev. 2:26), while this palm-bearing multitude will be **shepherdized** by the Lamb.

Their recompense consists in blessings enumerated as follows:

(1) **Service continual in the Temple of God.** It will later appear there is **no temple** in the New Jerusalem, when it shall be exposed to view, either in relation to the Millennial earth, or the eternal state. We gather from this statement that while in the Father's house there are many abodes or mansions, the temple of the future in the heavens will be a spiritual temple, made up of the spiritual house now being built up. We have this promise in Rev. 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God and he shall go no more out." The temple itself consists of believers (who are taken out of this age before the times of judgment), as living stones and Christ, the "precious corner stone." In this holy sanctuary these tribulation saints will **minister**.

(2) **God's dwelling place is in their midst.** "They are before the throne." Their position is not such as is occupied by the church—the executive body of the throne, but they stand in proximity, indicating God's knowledge and favor. "He shall tabernacle over them," or, according to Weymouth, "He will shelter them in His tent." How graciously God overshadowed Israel in the wilderness journey! His light was a canopy overshadowing. He was a file leader—a pillar of fire by night, a cloud by day. He was their rearward also. Enfolded in that cloud, they were sheltered in the sea. Encompassed in their encamp-

ment, Israel in type, intimates this future brooding of God over these earth-weary pilgrims, who are now come to trust under His wings forever, and inherit the full reward of the Lord God.

(3) **They are come to the Father's house—there is bread and to spare.** This implies the presence of extreme hunger and thirst during their earthly probation. The test of this time will be God or the apostate church. The Harlot's persecution will explain the hunger, cold and exposure of winter; and the burning heat of the summer sun. But now they are comforted. The abundance of all things of which they were destitute, signifies a rare thoughtfulness of the bountiful Father—a full compensation for the past poverty and persecution.

(4) **Last, but not least, the personal comfort and ministry of the Father and the Son.** As a mother gathers to her bosom the suffering, sobbing child, kisses away its tears, soothes away its pain, until the little throbbing heart is stilled and smiles shine through the tears like rainbows glistening through the raindrops, our Mother God with His hand will wipe away the tears springing from heartache and heartbreak. The Lamb shall be their Shepherd. The twenty-third Psalm, the comfort of so many of earth's pilgrims, will have a new meaning beyond this dark "valley of the shadow of death," this great tribulation, if we may accommodate it in this sense. And why not; is not the Bible written for the saints of all time? "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me by the still waters."

The tribulation saints find the richest meaning of this Psalm as they shall "dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

CHAPTER IX.

A VISION OF WRATH TO COME.

Predicting: The Silence of Heaven—a Judgment premonition. The Appearing of Seven Angels—a Judgment Preparation. The Offering of Incense—a Judgment Presentation. The Sounding of Four Trumpets—a Judgment Proclamation.—Rev. VIII.

God has made complete provision for the objects of His grace during the impending judgments. Noah's ark, prepared for the saving of his house, no doubt has a typical application to the close of the age, when Divine shelter shall be provided against the days of wrath, for the faithful of Israel. The **sealing** of Israel has been noted. The gathering of numberless Gentiles, saved in the time of the great apostasy, further illustrates a gracious purpose successfully operating in this most trying time.

The curse of prophecy **continues** after this in the midst of **judgment activities**. Six seals of the seven sealed books were opened in orderly precision; then came the parenthesis of grace, disclosing the workings of Divine mercy amid preponderating judgments.

So severe were the consequences following the six broken seals the sufferers decided the day of the Lamb's wrath had come. This underestimated the **scope** and **intensity** of Divine wrath, the people not as yet realizing the extent of resistance the race will offer Him, who is and will be earth's rightful sovereign.

It remains for the opening of the **seventh seal** to call forth the unprecedented display of the wrath of God and the Lamb. **The seventh seal embraces a great deal**, including **seven trumpet blasts**. **The seventh trumpet contains seven vials of wrath**. **Three series of judgments** are embraced by the seals:

The first consists of six seals, now open.

The second involves the seventh seal, with six trumpets.

The third concludes with the seventh trumpet and its seven vials.

The first series were but a prelude—a preparation for severer conditions to follow.

The breaking of the seventh seal at once **opens** the “**book**,” now in possession of the Lamb. The whole contents of this scroll will be laid bare, as rapidly as its instructions can be described and enforced. Every individual instrument employed; the manner by which God’s purpose will be consummated and mysteries hidden but silently working through centuries, will be brought into relief.

“And when He had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour” (verse 1).

A Portentous Silence.

37. Silence in heaven? How strange! Can we forget the former scenes of activity? The song of the victorious saints exulting in the exaltation of the Lamb to His Sovereign rights (chap. 5)? The shouts of myriads of angels, too, in ascribing to Him, honor, dominion and might? Harpers and golden harps are silent. Palm bearers and shouts of victory are hushed. The ceaseless cry—the thrice “holy” adoration of the “living ones” is stilled for “half an hour.” A short time indeed. Why is silence in heaven so impressive? A short time indeed, but there are moments crowned with the weight of years, yea, there are moments that seem interminable. The crisis moment of a great battle; the last few seconds of the passing pilgrim; the few swings of the pendulum, while the soul is in suspense.

“Silence speaks louder than words.” How true, in this instance! **Expressive** as immortality will render our once stammering tongues, there seems a limit in **heaven**, when it comes to describe the “wrath to come.” What can this silence be, if not a profound and indes-

cribable **awe** in anticipation of the woes about to be proclaimed by the sounding of the trumpets? What else can this silence signify than deepest sympathy—What can it mean unless scenes and events and effects inexpressible pity in view of earth's fiery baptism? are coming to light, unequalled, indescribable?

Why will heaven not intervene?—is a frequently repeated question. Alas, the consequences otherwise would involve a wreck of even greater extent—the dissolution of the very government of God.

This silence portending so much suggests the solemn, earnest and prayerful attitude we should assume, as we too, through the prophetic lens, look forward to the days of the seventh seal.

The Preparation of the Seven Angels .

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and seven trumpets were given unto them” (verse 2).

Everything in God's dominion that obeys His will moves in order and conformity; with system and perfect arrangement. “Order is heaven's first law,” someone has said, and that, truly. There is no rush, confusion—nothing savoring of earth's mob rushes and rashness. Principalities exist. **Ranks of angels, varying in degree**, each having his appointed sphere, knowing his commission and position. Like finely disciplined troops, they await the word of command. Their powers are delegated; “The trumpets were given to them.” Is it not worthy of God, the organizer of all government on earth, to exhibit the perfection of arrangement as to every detail involved in the Lamb's great conquest in recovering earth's dominion? There is **method** in the power behind the scenes. Such orderliness is a forceful lesson in church government, wherein such lawlessness, irreverence and contempt for God's anointed are frequently shown.

Seven angels, who are but one illustration of the organized system prevailing above, are summoned into

executive **service**, and to them is committed the direction of forces beyond human control; yet these ministers of God are subject to the Sovereign Head.

They are **presence angels**. Gabriel introduced himself: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Lu. 1:19). He was an archangel. The Jews claim there are seven of this rank in tradition.

Paul's summary of angelic ranks in Col. 1:16 is: "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be **thrones**, or **dominions**, or **principalities**, or **powers**, all things were created by Him and for Him."

Four ranks are mentioned. Some infer Paul enumerated the full number, others that he omitted some. Archangels are generally rated as belonging to the class of "principalities." It is well for us that our God has kept us in blissful ignorance of the greatness and vastness of the scope of His celestial government.

How could a child approach God in simple confidence if he knew the infinite heights of the lowest steps of the eternal throne? These ranks celestial, if laid open to perception, would present such a pyramid of rising glory, tier by tier, that the immeasurable distance between us and these wise, strong and holy orders of the Supreme Being, would make us feel ourselves thrust out of Divine notice.

Yet a glimpse is good to humble us, as in the case of Isaiah. Yea, a glimpse is helpful to understand a measure of the future glory of the **Redeemed**—for the glory of the church will be celestial and terrestrial—above angels.

The Proclamation of the Trumpets.

Trumpets were used to **proclaim** in ancient times. They were used to regulate the marches of Israel (Num. 10:2, 5, 6).

For calling the tribes to assembly (Num. 10:2, 3, 7).

They were sounded during religious processions (1 Chron. 13:8).

They trumpeted the accession of kings (2 Kings 9:13).

They summoned the people to war (Jud. 3:27).

They proclaimed solemn feast days (Num. 10:10).

They announced the times of sacrifice (Num. 10:10).

These uses suggest the intent of the trumpets is the proclamation of public events. God, then, is about to announce without reservation His complete program concerning earth. All the above mentioned proclamations are about to be duplicated. The seven trumpets denote the completing of all God proposes to do.

These mystic trumpets will be the bugle blasts marshaling armies and mobilizing innumerable hosts to the great battle of God Almighty; will summon great feasts and solemn conventions; will proclaim the "everlasting gospel;" herald the millennial jubilee, and announce the enthronement of Christ as King over all the earth. Yet these trumpets must not be confused with the ancient literal trumpets of the priests, nor with the trump of God, summoning the waiting ones into the presence of the **Bridegroom** (1 Thes. 4:16). In this last instance, it is the Lord Himself who descends into the air, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. Great confusion will arise in attempting to synchronize the "trump of God" with the "seven trumpets" of the Apocalypse. The summons Paul relates, is a gracious call to the church before judgment times. There is evidently no connection.

The presentation of the Prayers of the Saints.

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. and the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake" (Rev. 8:3-5.)

An inner glimpse of the Temple and its ministering priest is afforded, as a second phase of the seventh seal. This scene discloses the **underlying source** of the judgment activities.

The Lord Jesus Christ is introduced in a different role from that which appeared in connection with the jasper throne. There He was "**the Lamb**;" here He is "another angel." He is the Lamb in **nearness** to His church. It is the blood that makes us nigh, and in future relation we shall be one with Him, by virtue of consummated redemption. He is angelic in portraiture, with reference to Israel—a presentation more **remote**. Such was Christ in the Old Testament as the angel of the covenant. The angel is occupied in **priestly** ministry, so who else can it be but Jesus? "There is one Mediator between God and man."

1. **The angel has a golden censer.** His position is at the altar, the altar after which the **brazen** altar in Moses' Tabernacle was designed.

One of the most striking things in the book of Revelation is the **change of imagery**. The early scenes were set amid **church surroundings**, the seven candlesticks, and Christ in the midst. Here He is at the altar of burnt offering—a temple scene—decidedly Jewish in character, is the whole environment. Does this not further indicate the church is withdrawn, inasmuch as the imagery is so different?

Of old, the fire of God fell from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering to be maintained day and night by sacrifice and never go out. **The altar of incense** was within the precincts of the sanctuary. The fire burning thereon was transferred from the brazen altar. A golden censer was used to carry the fire to the **golden** altar—the altar of incense.

This solemn act indicated the acceptability of incense was founded upon sacrifice offered on the brazen altar. The fire that burns the incense must be sacrificial fire. Strange fire offered meant **abomination** to God and **death** to the presumptuous priest.

The incense was compounded by Divine prescription. It is described in Ex. 30:34-36. The merits, perfections and beauties of Christ's character are thereby symbolized. The fire drew forth their fragrance and the perfume was carried upward in a cloud of ascending smoke. The priests offered this incense as a sweet smelling savor, teaching man's worship, devotion and communion with God is accepted on the ground of Christ's sacrifice; wherein the judgment fires drew forth such complete obedience to the will of God, the merits thereof are accepted for undeserving man.

These comments explain the scene before us. Under the altar were seen many martyred saints, praying, "How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This prayer is to be answered. Unworthy in themselves, Christ adds the incense of His own worthiness to "the prayers of **all** saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne." It may be the saints' prayers for the "kingdom to come" in all ages, are included. The fire is taken from the altar and cast upon the earth.

A striking and solemn meaning there is in all this. The prayers of saints mingled with the incense of Christ's merit, and consumed by the fire of His judgment, ascend as acceptable to God, including the acceptability of the saints themselves. But when the censer is turned **earthward**, and its contents poured out, **judgments** result upon mankind. It was on Calvary's cross, the fire of Divine judgment consumed our Lord. The cross was a two-fold exhibition, both of law and grace, pardon and guilt. There was displayed God's mercy and judgment. Henceforth, every individual's relation to God is determined by his attitude to Him who was crucified on the accursed tree. The result is before us, at least in part. Faith in the crucified One, delivers the believer from wrath, as the accepted incense denotes; but the very judgment meted on Christ is **poured out** upon an **unbelieving** race.

The **blessings** of **ascending** incense find their source at the brazen altar of burnt offering.

41 The **cursings** of **descending** incense, emanate from the source of the altar of sacrifice. Christ's blood is **for** us, or **upon** us, according to our acceptance or rejection. The **uplifted** censer declares the fellowship all may know, with the Father; the **inverted** censer reveals His outpoured wrath upon the children of men. It is fire **from the altar**, that provokes voices and thunders, lightnings and earthquakes. All these are premonitions of doom.

The **angels** prepare to sound. All is arranged. Each knows his place and part and will act according to program.

The Proceedings Following the Sounding of the Trumpets.

42 (a) "The first angel sounded, and there followed **hail** and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up" (Verse 7).

The range of Trumpet judgments is wider than those under the six Seals. There, one-fourth of the race was involved. Now one-third of mankind, of earth itself and of the environing heavens are stricken. **The first blasts** summon destructive elements upon the "earth"—the successive soundings of the second, third and fourth Trumpets affect "**sea**," "**rivers**" and "**light**" in corresponding degree. Such would be the meaning of a literal interpretation of these calamities. If a symbolic meaning is the intent, it becomes more or less speculative to attempt to unravel the tangles in which many writers enmesh themselves and their readers. Great ingenuity is shown in weaving elaborate designs, but our aim in this humble treatise is to keep near enough shore, to be in sight of land. This first Trumpet may carry with it the thought of blight upon commercial prosperity and human pride in consequence. Peter has written, "All flesh is as grass, and

all the glory of man as the flowers of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it" (1 Pet. 1:24).

There seems little reason to doubt a literal application. The hail and fire were agents of destruction, when God would compel Pharaoh to let His people go. The case here is a parallel. Israel must be released from the nations, who stand against its restoration as a recognized nationality. Would it be strange for God to duplicate His former signs and wonders? In this very act, Israel can better understand the trend of these modern miraculous displays. We must recognize, however, that Egypt was the arena of wrath then (Ex. 9:23-24); the scope, here, affects one-third of the habitable globe. "Blood" will be a new phenomenon in this relation, marking this judgment as something beyond the providential order—it will be a stamp showing its superhuman origin and nature.

The Second Trumpet.

(6)

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (Verses 8, 9).

There is assurance in this description of a comparative meaning. Where the word "as" occurs, the exact literalness is not to be contemplated. Some infer from the mountains hurled into the sea, is meant the vanishing of the old government of the Roman world, dashed into pieces amid the revolt of society, which is now chafing with lawless spirit under restraint. If the sea means multitudes, this may be a correct explanation. One difficulty arises. If one-third "the creatures in the sea die," and the sixth Woe Trumpet kills another third (9:18), there would only remain one-third of the race for the seventh Trumpet to deal with.

It is safer to keep to the exact words. "A great mountain of fire" in **appearance**, actually is cast into

the (Mediterranean) Sea, the centre of the Roman world. Vivid **meteoric** displays are not new to us. How trivial a circumstance for God to hurl a broken fragment of some heavenly body, of magnitude to suit His purpose, with destruction of fish and all living things in the ratio as stated. The ships, too, would be ruined coextensively with the proportions of this falling "mountain." Hosea predicted, "The fishes shall be taken away" (4:1-3). Isaiah foretold, "The day of the Lord . . . shall be upon the ships of Tarshish" (Is. 2:16).

The Third Trumpet.

(C) "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star is Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter" (Rev. 8:10-11).

The angels of the churches are called the seven stars. (Chap. 1). Upon this statement, some writers urge that this star called "Wormwood" is a great religious leader fallen. The right to call the angels of the churches "stars" is authorized by Christ. But in the case of this solitary star, we receive no such authority. It would seem wise to accept what is written as meaning what it says.

Who could such an apostate be? We are limited in our field of selection. It cannot mean any past fallen leader, for we are now witnessing judgment times. Can this be Anti-christ? No. This star falls from heaven. He comes from "beneath." Are we elsewhere informed of another great leader? None save the false prophet, whose rise is from the earth (Rev. 13:11). The comments of Mr. Lord seem sufficiently clear on this. "The star," he remarks, "obviously was not a solid globe, but a thin, transparent meteor (or comet), which as it swept along near the surface and sunk to the ground, still left the objects it enveloped perceptible to the apostle, and was soon absorbed by the

waters and the earth. He beheld the rivers and fountains still running, discerned a change wrought in them by the meteor, and saw that it was a new element infused into them that rendered them deadly to many who drank of them."

The name **Wormwood** describes the quality—bitterness, with which it affected the waters, rather than suggesting a former designation.

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise" (Verse 12).

The Fourth Trumpet

affects the sources of light. Egypt's ninth plague, before the **death stroke** was administered, was darkness over the whole land, save the portion of Israel. One can scarcely escape noticing the similar trend here. Many prophetic announcements are made respecting the sun, moon and stars in these eventful times. Isaiah (13:9) declared: "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel with wrath and fierce with anger, to lay the earth desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

Can we estimate the gloom, the chill, and the resultant ills consequent upon the obscuring of one-third of all light, for one-third of the time? What failure of flower and fruit, bud and blossom! What despondency and despair will prey upon the unhappy dwellers upon earth in those days!

These **four Trumpets** affect man's **environment**; the subsequent **three Trumpets** touch man's **person**.

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe,

woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Verse 13).

A pre-announcement by a heavenly messenger—an eagle, as some versions render, is made in the mid-heavens. The effort to identify this "eagle" or angel with the saints is absolutely unsupportable, when we remember the "eagles" our Lord referred to in Matthew (24:28) ("For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together") are birds of prey, hovering over the slain bodies, when the "fowls of heaven" are called to the supper of the great God (Rev. 19:17-18). Interesting it is to speak of "eagle saints," but let us keep to the Word.

The range of judgment is about to widen. The warning is that a **universal sweep of wrath** shall accompany the last three Trumpets, which bear the title of three Woes, or the Woe Trumpets.

CHAPTER X.

A VISION OF WOES.

Setting forth Satan's Original Degradation; His Temporary Elevation; His Wrathful Visitation and Administration of Destruction. (Rev. ix.)

God's Word is the more sure Word of prophecy—a lamp shining in a dark place. Like a great lighthouse, its rays reach dangerous rocks and reefs, as surely as it provides the safe harbor lights. Lighthouses do not create dangers; they merely point out their existence. God's prophetic truth contains some dark utterances. Prophets are often made responsible for their message, but if they are given to see ominous and portentous conditions, is it not their duty to sound the alarm?

The field of investigation we now enter is so threatening, one shrinks from drawing its perspective. Yet such is the task and responsibility before us. It is better to face the facts in **prophecy**, than in **reality**, as millions are destined to do, who reject God's merciful warnings.

The vision now approaches the last three and one-half years of the **great Tribulation**. Any attempt to determine with exactness the precise moment the prophetic period known as the Time of Jacob's trouble begins in these chaotic judgment times, must prove difficult indeed, and more or less unsatisfactory to many. There are such diversified views, we may expect perfect unanimity of opinion only when the fulfillment of all the symbols explains them. We may, with much degree of certainty, approximate the time this momentous epoch will begin. This we may say with confidence—the whole period between the **Rapture of the Bride of Christ (the mystic body)**, and the **Revelation of the Son of Man**, will be a time of trouble,

more or less. In this sense, the intervening years, whether they be **seven** or **forty** according to different exponents, will be a tribulation season. As we understand the Scripture, however, the exact length of the **Anti-christ's persecution of Israel** will be **three and one-half years**.

If we measure the "times of the Gentiles" by **lunar time** (2520 years) from the third and last invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (587 B. C.), there remains eighteen years for the Gentile nations to complete their course, as appears by adding 1915 to 587, the result of which is 2502, or eighteen years short of the seven times (2520) predicted in Leviticus (26:28), as Israel's period of discipline. If this same prophetic time be computed by **solar time**, a period of some 36 years is added to the result—the difference between lunar time (360 days to the year) and solar time $365\frac{1}{4}$ days to the year), accounts for the margin of result. There could be time sufficient in prophetic dates for a tribulation of 40 years, with a **margin before** the Seals are opened. But if the lunar method of computation be the Scripture standard of time measurement, there apparently remains but 18 years for the "times of the Gentiles" to be completed. The whole time of sorrow, from any standpoint, will exceed seven years. The preliminary conquests of the Conquering Prince in Palestine, certainly imply trouble, before the covenant is confirmed for one week (seven years). (Dan. 9:27).

Jesus describes the days of the first four Seals, as the "beginning of sorrow" (Matt. 24:8). He does not summarize these judgments as the time of the **great distress**, although they will prove severe upon **earth** and its inhabitants. He speaks of these as the "**tribulation** of those days," however. (Matt. 24:29).

Jesus, further, explains the terrible sequence of the opening of the fifth Seal, "then they shall deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you" (Matt. 24:9).

It is in verse 15 the warning of Israel to take flight is given—"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,

stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." Does this not mark the beginning of "Jacob's trouble" or the time of great distress?

Israel's elect is sealed after the sixth Seal (Chapter 7). Their sealing is in **anticipation** of the great trial awaiting. **The conclusion is, somewhere in the days of the seventh Seal, this eventful** three years and a half of woe sets in. Of the specific time Jesus predicted, "For then shall be a time of great suffering such as never has been from the beginning of the world 'till now'" (Matt. 24:21 W). Daniel speaks in similar strain, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to the same time" (Dan. 12:1).

The Seventy Weeks.

The seventy prophetic weeks of Daniel constitute the very hub of prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27). These seventy weeks cover a period of 490 years. The rule of prophetic measure is **a day for a year**. Seventy weeks contain 490 prophetic days, or 490 years.

Sixty-nine weeks or 483 years lay between the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem (445 B. C.) and the Messiah (Christ). So far the prophecy is proven by historical fact.

One week remains—the seventieth—or seven years to accomplish Israel's complete course, as a nation, before "everlasting righteousness" is ushered in, and the Holy Place anointed. Nearly twenty centuries have passed, why is this week apparently forgotten? Because God does not compute time to Israel, while they are scattered, and unrecognized among the nations. **Israel's clock is stopped, while they are without priest, temple, altar or national existence.** When the elect 144,000 are chosen, they become God's official witness on earth, and shall be reckoned among the nations.

They will be regathered, as has frequently been stated in these pages. The Prince shall **"confirm the**

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covenant with many for one week." This notable seven years continues the time when by far the greater part of the Apocalypse will be fulfilled. **"And in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease."** This leaves three and one-half years "for the overspreading of abominations" (Dan. 9:27). **"And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, shall be 1,290 days"** (Dan. 12:11).

Again this special season is mentioned in Rev. 12:12, **"And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent."** These times synchronize and all together establish the epoch of Israel's distress as being the latter half of the seven years of Israel's final week before "everlasting righteousness is ushered in, the vision of Daniel's prophecy sealed up and the most Holy (temple) anointed."

The Causes of Tribulation.

1. **God's judgment upon the nations.** The words spoken to the great king of Babylon—the message once written by the hand upon the wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin"—numbered, numbered, weighed, divided—explains it all. The nations have turned their hearts against the God of heaven. They worship a man, instead of God.

God's judgment finds just basis for fullest expression, because He is being utterly disowned; His Son rejected; a false Christ finally accepted; His servants martyred; His chosen Israel persecuted—in a single sentence, God and all He holds sacred is blasphemed by the profanation of His Holy Temple by an idol image satanically possessed, commanding the homage of the world.

The early judgments are **remedial** in purpose; they eventually become **retributive**, as defiance and organized resistance against God take firm root.

2. **Satan will come down in great wrath.** Jesus' prophetic vision witnessed the fall of Satan from his present throne. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Lu. 10:18). (b)

The meeting of Christ and His beloved Bride (**the true church**) in the air occasions "war in heaven." The dragon is cast down, and his angels. They turn in fury against the remnant of God's people on earth (Rev. 12:7-10). The times of trouble will be characterized by an overspreading of Satanic agencies—a reign of terrible superhuman powers, as will appear after the sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets.

3. **The rise of the Anti-christ and the furious campaign** against Israel will both augment the woes of these days. His conquest to gain ascendancy will provoke world-wide wars (Seal 2, chapter 6). The final outcome will be the supremacy of the Beast over the confederation of the ten kings, whose ultimate power exists for a season with the "Beast," who secures a brief period in which congratulations of the mighty men and the rich men are in order. (c)

Later Israel's refusal to worship the image of the beast will furnish a pretext for an international war campaign against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:1-2).

The apostate church, too, will become the victim of the Anti-christ's revenge, as is witnessed in the downfall of **mystic Babylon**.

Indeed these times witness the fruition of age-long rebellion against God. It is the harvest of the tares. The accumulated powers of man and Satan his god, are brought into rebellion against God and His Christ. Lawlessness and anarchy reign supreme. Paul gives a composite picture in these words: "This know also, in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of

pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:1-4). These things will explain why such incomparable woes are now announced.

The First Woe, or the Fifth Trumpet.

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (Verses 1-3).

The feature of interest is a "fallen star." The apostle did not see a "star fall"—the original version is at fault here. Weymouth and others give the tense correctly—"I saw a star which **had fallen**." It is not the act of **falling**, in vision here, but the fact of a star which had fallen, that is contemplated.

This "star" is a personage. The personal pronouns make this clear. The Star called "Wormwood" had no actions ascribed, applicable to personality. In this instance, we are informed "to **him** was given the key of the bottomless pit, and **he** opened the bottomless pit." Evidently, this star is an **intelligent being**.

Angels of God are called "Morning Stars" (Job 38:7). Satan is designated in Isaiah (14:12) "Lucifer." He is addressed, "O Lucifer, son of the morning." A pathetic lament is chanted over his downfall in Ezekiel (28:13-19).

The fallen Star is Satan. But it is doubtful if the fall spoken of here refers to his casting down after the war in heaven (Rev. 12). It most likely is a reference to his original degradation.

The Keys of Hades.

Christ held the keys of death and Hades. To Satan is given the keys of the bottomless pit, which is a part of Hades—the lowest depths of sheol, where myriads

of angels, who fell in the great transgression, are imprisoned. **Some fallen spirits** roam in dry and solitary wastes, seeking inhabitation in the souls of men, as is instanced in the case of the poor demoniac among the tombs. Sin gives entrance to these wandering spirits—they are the impersonators of the dead, the very inner heart of spiritualism. **But another class**, more depraved and vicious, are fettered **with chains of darkness** to be unloosed in judgment times (2 Pet. 2:4). The world has wooed and won Satanic rule—they worship the god of this age—they must surely reap the results.

The Opening of the Abyss.

“And he opened the bottomless pit.” Amid the smoke rolling upward in darkening clouds; amid the rising fumes from this burning pit—there come forth **“locusts upon the earth.”**

This is a fine field in which to play theological gymnastics. The existence of such hideous creatures seems very repulsive to modern aesthetic taste. Instantly the question comes, who created these monstrosities? The answer is **sin**.

Physicians can show deformities ushered into this world—unspeakable. The grace of life belongs to man and woman in their union. The power to abuse is the source of imbecility. Sin's wrecks are legion in time. What about the effects of sin upon the spirit world? The power to **prostitute** is sin's prerogative. We are not speaking of sex relation in the spirit world, by any means, but merely illustrating by what sin does in earthly relation, so as to disprove the **creation** of such creatures as are brought forth from the pit. They are the **degenerates** of a once glorious creation, the product of disobedience.

The Locust Army

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"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of god in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (Verses 4-11).

They are called locusts, not because they are earthly locusts at all, but the word conveys the nearest approach of human language to describe this invading army. They have a King. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek Apollyon.

Earth is destined to be invaded by hordes of emissaries of Satan from the pit. For long, the race has been preyed upon by denizens of the air; now, for a space of five months, more dangerous tormentors overrun the world.

1. They are equipped for war.
2. They have the appearance of horses.
3. They possess crowns, in resemblance.
4. They have faces like men.
5. They are subject to their king.
6. They have hair as the hair of women.
7. Their teeth are as the teeth of lions.
8. They resemble scorpions with stinging tails.
9. Their power to torment is indescribable.

That this "locust" army represents superhuman agencies of torment is evident. They are under control and respond to their king. They are creatures of Satan's realm, as is shown by their obedience to him. The Lord associated **serpents** and **scorpions** with the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). Is it thought incredible to connect such hellish instruments with this "fallen star"? "The King of the abyss" is a mighty angel of Satan—the "fallen star" is Satan himself.

The sealed ones of Israel are exempt from this painful scourge. The 144,000 are still on the earth. The **unbelieving** of both Israel and the nations find no defense nor shelter from these avenging hordes. Reference to the time preceding the birth of our Saviour will recall the terrific onslaught of demonism then, although of a character less violent than is predicted for the last days. As we witness the intrusion of spiritism in modern times, we need not shrink from the contemplation of a more serious invasion of fallen spirits. Are not multitudes giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons? When Satan is given greater liberty and the world is given license to believe his lie—"Ye shall be as gods"—the outlook is terrible, but it is the inevitable consequence of darkness preferred to light. The word of God, as touching the kingdom of evil, having been relegated to oblivion, nothing short of the most weird and woeful exhibition of this kingdom with its lawless, vicious hordes, can convince of the reality of Satan and his power. Men may not believe in a Devil now; the time draws nigh when all such skepticism will vanish.

Death will be sought in vain. If the vision contains a hidden meaning, as yet not given men to comprehend, enough is written to stir the most rebellious heart to seek the way of escape our Saviour taught us—"Pray ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things."

The Second Woe, or the Sixth Trumpet.

Two woes remain to drain the full cup of wrath and make judgment complete upon the rebellious world.

“And the sixth seal sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel, which had the trumpets, ‘Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates’ ” (Verses 13-14).

The sixth Trumpet sounds in days our Lord compared with the days of Lot and of Noah; in both instances, there were sins, the stench of which was intolerable. Demon worship and demon cohabitation, corruption and violence, lawlessness and oppression, drunkenness and licentiousness, is the harrowing spectacle of the ancient world, which God could not spare; a condition evoking the prophecy of Enoch, because of the likeness of the modern world, saying, “Behold the Lord cometh with 10,000 of His saints.”

This judgment proceeds from the golden altar. A voice cries from the four horns thereof. The horns denote **power**—the four express **universality**. Thus the full efficiency of the intercession of all the saints is brought to bear in vengeance upon the whole earth.

This potency of prayer takes form in the release of **four destroying** angels, who are bound in the region of the great Euphrates river. They cannot be angels of God, as were the four restraining ones mentioned in chapter 7.

This great valley is the cradle of the world. There, the great world empire was consolidated and Babylon, its seat of power, was situated; there, was the scene of the first rebellion after the flood, and the nursery of the mystic Babylon religion; there Israel's oppressors were developed and from this center the invaders of Palestine went forth. Tradition describes the wilderness surrounding as the abode of evil spirits. Jesus declared, “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man it wanders in dry and desert places.”

There, will be the seat of Satan's power in tribulation times, until his "man" shall bring ruin by attempting to set up his throne in Jerusalem, thereby provoking God's terrible plagues, which shall be poured out upon the seat of the Beast.

The Mystic Horsemen.

"And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt" (Verses 15-19).

Revelation the 19th chapter presents a scene of heavenly horsemen, descending—the victorious army of the saints seated upon white horses, and Christ, the Faithful and True, a mounted Warrior in command. There seems to be a contrasted portrayal of hellish power brought into action here. This host of two hundred millions cannot be men. History affords no record of such an aggregation of men or armies. There is a definite time set for this unequaled onslaught—they were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year. This expression does not convey the extent of time these forces are waging war upon mankind, but the **date** when they are to appear. Until something more satisfactory than the Turkish wars can be supplied as the alleged fulfillment of this prophecy, we had better accept the words of the prophet literally.

The three agencies of destruction, fire, smoke and brimstone, require great stretch of imagination to find their equivalent in gunpowder and modern explosives.

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Likewise, it seems difficult to account for these lurid hosts, clad in armor of jacinth, brimstone and fire, with a modern army of men, yet to be mobilized and led against the Roman Empire. We are content to accept this word as presenting as nearly as finite language may, an innumerable host and formidable power of a realm the less we know or understand the better. The purpose of this visitation on God's side is remedial in part—but, alas, men “repented not.” Surely, the hearts of these impenitent ones shall prove themselves prone to do evil and only evil continually.

The testimony of Jesus was rejected by an apostate church and the world on the eve of the Rapture of the saints.

A remnant of Israel will accept the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, as the sealed ones indicate. The myriads of the Hebrew race will make a “covenant with death.” When the overflowing scourge passes over the land, unbelieving Israel must be trodden down by it.

The Gentile nations are being gleaned and a great numberless company comes forth with the rewards of victory. But the rank and file of the race not destroyed by the plagues, continue to resist even the judgments of the Almighty. The religion of the world is demon worship and idolatry; the practice of its people is murder, sorcery (drugs), fornication and thefts. What danger there is in hardening the heart! (Verses 20-21).

CHAPTER XI.

THE VISION OF THE OPEN BOOK.

Introducing: **A Person of Distinction, an Act of Appropriation, a Book of Revelation, and an Oath of Confirmation.—Rev. X.**

The days of the Sixth Trumpet, the Second Woe, are eventful indeed. The results of many acts and the actors are seen converging for the climacteric display. The Second Woe is past. Its judgments are complete. The results are summarized in the closing verses of chapter nine; yet, strange to say, the **announcement** of its close is not made until a number of other important events are brought forward. The proclamation is found in Chapter 11: 4, "**The Second Woe is past.**"

We believe the deferring of this announcement is for a definite purpose, and that, to show the culmination of many issues is reached in the days of the Sixth Trumpet, at its very close.

(1) It will appear in the next chapter, that the witnessing of God's two elect and anointed ones will **cease at this juncture.**

Because the course of events has been scarcely interrupted thus far there are many things God would make **more explicit.** So little has been learned of the great Oppressor, Anti-christ; such a mere hint suggested as to Israel's return and covenant privileges, the Holy Spirit here introduces two deeply interesting things, both of which relate to the **exact time we are considering.**

1. He, by a solemn and impressive scene, gives a subsequent revelation of these very things, into which we are now stimulated to inquire.

2. He would make certain to all, the testimony of the two supernatural witnesses **closes** simultaneously with the passing of the Sixth Trumpet Woe. But inasmuch as this testimony continues for three and one-half years, much of Chapter 11 must be of **retrospective** character, although the vision is given during the season of the Sixth Trumpet.

“And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire” (Verse 1).

Let us first consider

A DISTINGUISHED PERSON.

The age is drawing to a close. The three and one-half years—the half-week of broken covenant—has about filled up its measure, in point of time. Yet a full series of seven last plagues, more violent, more swift and more appalling must yet visit the throne of the “Beast” and his mad followers.

Open defiance and rebellion against the Lamb are fast heading up in an organized military campaign—with one decisive battle, known as Armageddon. A solemn, startling warning is now presented—the foes of God may well hesitate. The reminder that God is Supreme and confident of the issue comes in the person and proclamation of a “Mighty Angel.”

47 The angel is not a **created** being. The Greek word for angel is not confined to those ministering spirits, so commonly regarded as having exclusive right to said designation. The Lord—Jehovah—is often presented as the Covenant Angel (Gen. 48:16, Ex. 23:23). As the Angel of the Lord, Christ acts in relation to Israel. This Angel bears the marks of deity and carries with Him the heraldry of the Jasper throne (Chapters 4 and 5).

1. The **Covenant sign**, “A rainbow upon His head.” All this bow signified, as seen “around about the throne,” is symbolized here.

2. The **Majesty** of judgment and glory, "Clothed with a cloud."

3. The "Ancient of Days." "His face was as it were the sun, and His feet as pillars of fire." (Compare Chapter 1:15 and 16).

This glorious Personage can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. However, we must not confuse this angelic act with **His Revelation** in Chapter 19.

As a whole, this description presents a portrait the student of classics may admire.

The sun shines in His countenance—what glory!

The burning fire rages in His feet—what judgment!

The cloud envelops Him as a robe—what majesty!

The rainbow encircles His head as a diadem—what faithfulness!

An Authoritative Attitude.

"And he had in his hand a little book open, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (Verse 2).

The ordinary act of placing the foot, becomes an extraordinary act under certain circumstances. Canaan's conquest was accomplished by virtue of a previous right granted by the Lord Himself. This right was acknowledged by obedience to the instructions, "Every place the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given you" (Josh. 1:3). The famous "discoverers" frequently appropriated new lands and even the great Pacific for their "crowns" in this manner. The strength of their pre-emption act, however, depended upon the strength of their military forces to maintain their claim.

In this sublime spectacle the right foot of the Angel is set upon the sea and His left foot on the earth. It is an all inclusive assertion of right to possession of the land and the sea. (The Lord Jesus has authority to lay claim to sovereignty over all the earth.) It is the right of creation, and a subsequent and even higher claim, that of **Redemption**. Indeed, His prerogative is complete. The prerogative on the **Divine** side is

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finely expressed in John's Gospel, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was nothing made that was made." On the **Human** side; He possesses a King's lineage, "I am the root and the offspring of David" (Chap. 22:16). He has an inherited title of all God bequeathed to Abraham (Gal. 3:16). His kinsman, or redemptive claims, have been discussed in Chapter 5.

The attitude in the light of these credentials becomes most significant.

"And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices" (Verse 3).

Might too, as well as right, is involved in this majestic mien. His lionlike voice secures response. Seven mighty thunders echo a confirmation of power in reservation, unconquerable and invincible.

The Book of Redemption

is once more the object of intense interest. The same book engaged our attention in Chapter 5. There it was **sealed**. The breaking of these seals has been the theme of four entire chapters, 6-9. The book is now **open**. Consider further the significance thereof:

1. The Angel's pre-emption act is evidently sustained by the written authority within. "He had in His hand a little book open." He, who was found worthy to open it, is entitled to assume the kinsman Redeemer's part.

2. The disposal of the book. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, 'Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.' And I went unto the angel and said unto Him, 'Give me the little book.' And He said unto me, 'Take it and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.' And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it my belly was bitter. And He

said unto me, 'Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings' " (Verses 8-11). Everything introduced in the Apocalypse is somewhere accounted for. We see this book no more. John, as representative of the church of God and Israel also, appropriates and assimilates it.

Is this indicative that all Christ's rights, prophetic, priestly and kingly, are given as the prophetic word, to be believed, understood, practiced, incorporated in His saints? It surely must be so. For the book contains the whole message of Redeeming love, Redeeming grace, Redeeming power and Redeeming judgments. It contains past, present and future disclosures of a redeemed inheritance. As such it is Gospel, for the Gospel not only proclaims a Saviour and Redeemer, but His rights and the enforcement thereof.

To eat it is sweet to the taste. "How sweet are thy words to my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb."

With what joy, believing hearts anticipate the comings of the Bridegroom and the King! Is not Christ within the hope of glory? How the heart thrills at the hope of release! What foretastes the Holy Spirit brings of the gladsome homecoming! And not for ourselves alone, but even more, we long to see Jesus exalted, for He is worthy. Earth's millions sitting in darkness, bound in affliction and iron, need Him too—how much words can never tell. Think ye not the message of this "little book" would satisfy their hungry hearts, if they only knew?

There is bitterness mingled with the sweet. Prophetic knowledge leads to prophetic ministry. The ministry of God's prophet involves hardship. "What went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses." Such was the inquiry and reply of Jesus, with reference to that unexcelled prophet, John the Baptist.

Moses' prophetic song (Deut. 32:24) contains a lament, showing the inner heart of the true messenger

of God. "They shall be burnt with hunger and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction." The sorrows of Israel in the times of tribulation are anticipated in these words, which explain the bitterness of prophecy. Israel is destined to drink this bitter cup, because "Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (Deut. 32:18).

Paul declared, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed (separated) from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2-3).

Ezekiel describes the effect of prophetic vision upon his own spirit thus: "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in the bitterness and in the heat of my spirit" (Ezk. 3:14).

These sidelights are a faithful commentary on the thought before us. The prophet must share both the knowledge and fellowship of the **Woe** of prophecy, as surely as he sips the nectar of **gracious** promise. Who, understanding the certainty of these coming times of trouble, can think lightly of their awful significance? True, many read of the recent earthquake in Italy, with little more than an exciting thrill, but when one stops to hear the cry of suffering babes muffled by the fallen debris, and remembers the little lambs of his own fold, it touches cords which vibrate in pain. The Christian, and especially the illuminated child of God, enters into a **deeper fellowship**, for well he knows the meaning of these last days of judgment, and the **eternal** consequences involved. A brief review will explain the bitterness—he who prophesies must eat the bitter with the sweet. Would that the church more fully understood that unutterable longing of the Holy Spirit, as He maketh intercession for the world, fast hastening into the vortex of judgment.

John must prophesy again. This command does not mean John will appear in these modern years, as some assume, to "prophesy again." It simply is an instruc-

tion for the continuation of prophetic unveiling. He is now conscious of the whole scope of the revealed purpose of God. Weymouth's translation makes this meaning clear, "You must prophesy **yet further** concerning peoples, nations, languages and many kings" (Verse 11 W).

That the days of the **seventh** Trumpet are known to him is seen in verses three and four. The utterances of the seven thunders are heard and **sealed for a time**. These **seven** thunders **complete** the judgment of God. Their mystery will certainly be revealed in the days of the **seventh Trumpet**, for it is emphatically announced, "The mystery of God shall then be finished" (Verse 7).

John's **continued prophecy** will be found in subsequent chapters, after the brief and comprehensive summary of the seventh Trumpet is recorded, in 11:14-19. It will be a satisfactory explanation of many important interrogations, as yet barely mentioned.

A Startling Proclamation.

We have reserved this as the last division of this chapter, in order to keep the "book" and its message clearly in mind.

"And swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants, the prophets" (Verses 6-7).

"**Time shall be no longer**" is an unfortunate translation. Weymouth comes once more to our assistance. "There shall be no further delay." This declaration of the Lord Jesus corresponds to a statement of Paul: "For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a **short** work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

Jesus, while on earth, said: "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.

But for the elect's (Israel's) sake, those days shall be shortened'' (Matt. 24:22). Some compute the actual length of the days of the seventh Trumpet as seventeen and one-half. The accuracy of this, or otherwise, we leave others to work out.

The previous sorrows have been a long travail for all the race, especially Israel and the Gentile saints. For them, the agony will not be prolonged. There will be one agonizing birth pang yet. The seven last plagues will, however, be the doom of the "Beast," the empire and his deluded supporters. The concentrated wrath of the great day of God will be beyond description. At the time this angelic proclamation is made, the throne of the impious one seems even more secure. How significant the announcement of its brief duration from henceforth, and how comforting that its end is assured.

The mystery finished. No doubt, this includes all the complex mystery of iniquity. Anti-christ will be revealed in his true character to all; his infamous reign brought to sudden end. The work of the leaven through the years shall have completed its corruption. Does the mystery of God include the mystery of the church? Then its manifestation will be made to the nations, as it descends with Christ in glorious power. Does it include the mystery of the marriage bond, as typical of the church? The joyous queen will be returning from the wedding. Does it include the mystery of Israel's temporary rejection? The chosen ones shall now possess the kingdom; the veil fully removed, they shall gaze upon the wounds of Jesus, and like Thomas, gladly exclaim, "My Lord and my God." Surely the Kingdom of Heaven in mystery is mystery no more. The net is now drawn to land; the fish are separated. The tares, too, are bundled; all the wheat is garnered. Yea, the mystery of resurrection and translation is now to be complete. All this and ever so much more is to be **finished** in these short days the angel foretells—the days of the seventh Trumpet.

Surely the day of consummation **will come**. He whose **aspect** is as the sun shining in His strength; He, whose **attitude** is so majestic, as He stands on pillars of fire; He, whose **apparel** is the billowy clouds; and whose **action** is an uplifted hand and a speaking voice heard amid the stars; and He, whose **answer** is the "artillery of the skies," **hath sworn it**. Because He can swear by no greater, He will swear by Himself—"He that liveth forever and forever." Believe it or not, its truth fairly glows in His glorious presence; and is certain as His eternal character.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISION OF ISRAEL.

As Concerns the Completion and Appropriation of the Temple; the Desolation and Profanation of the Holy City; the Reservation and Preservation of an Elect Israel; and the Ministration and Tribulation of Two Anointed Witnesses. (Rev. 11.)

With the prophet, we now take our stand on Jewish ground. With greater confidence we may speak of the scenes awaiting our consideration. The Prophets have spoken in the Old Testament from Moses to Malachi, scattering a wealth of metaphor and simile so profusely, in connection with such abundance of literal facts, we are assured of the **hope of Israel's future.**

John is witnessing under a **new commission** given in Chapter 10—"Thou must prophesy again." His authority comes from the same glorious Person as talked with him from the midst of the seven candlesticks. These two scenes, so different, are equally impressive. The one, a church symbolism; the other, an Hebraic characterization; the one, the High Priest; the other, the Angel of the Covenant. Yet both lend grandeur and sublimity to the message and Divine command.

The judgment of apostate Christendom has been the theme of the first commission, embracing the first and second series of Seals and Trumpets, respectively. The Patmos prisoner will now proceed in unveiling a new vision concerning many peoples, nations and kings. An explanation is in order as to the **place** this vision takes in relation to the general order of events considered in the previous chapters.

These foregoing judgments carried us in mind into the days of the **Sixth Trumpet**. Are the contents of Chapter 11 set to be fulfilled **after** this Trumpet, **in the midst**, or what connection do they really sustain? Our reply is, the closing scene, **the death of the two witnesses, occurs** just before the announcement of the end of the Second Woe (the Sixth Trumpet). The purpose evidently is to give a complete climacteric view of all converging conditions in this evenful Trumpet. But in order to furnish an intelligible explanation, it becomes necessary to take a somewhat **retrospective view, tracing the conditions calling** for the testimony of these witnesses.

How limited would be our knowledge concerning Israel, the temple, the witnesses, and the desolation of Jerusalem, if the apostle's **second** vision was not recorded, bringing into relief these important subjects, all of which reach a **crisis** before the Second Woe is past.

The time embraced is the last three and one-half years of the great Tribulation, excepting the days of the seventh Trumpet, which will be short and decisive. It must be evident, the subject matter under discussion **antedates** the Sixth Trumpet, but reaches its **consummation therein**.

We will now follow the course of **Israel** through these times of **distress**. Their experiences will be found a remarkable revelation of God's faithfulness, both to preserve and discipline, in the midst of changing conditions.

Jerusalem Is the Center of the Drama,

for a drama it is with tragedy unprecedented, yet at no time in the history of nations is God seen interposing more wonderfully in behalf of a faithful remnant.

By the beginning of Daniel's "seventieth week," many Jews shall have returned to the Holy City, and the land of their fathers. A covenant confirmed will grant national privileges, religious liberty and guar-

antee the protection of the "coming Prince"—the later manifested Anti-christ. He will not discourage them in their religious aims, and probably sanctions the building of the Temple. A brief time of prosperity will attend Israel's agreement with their self-styled deliverer. Blind unbelief and arrogant self-confidence will characterize this unholy alliance.

Isaiah bears out this statement: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye **scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem**. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge (the desolation spoken of by Christ in Matt. 24:15) shall pass through, it shall not come nigh us . . . ,” but God says, "Judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet and the hail shall sweep away your refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place" (Is. 28:14-18). This covenant shall be broken in the midst of the week (Daniel 9:27). A time of distress follows. Hear Jeremiah's warning, "Ask ye now and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned to paleness? **Alas, for the day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it**" (Jer. 30:4-7).

The vision before us opens **on the eve of this time of trouble**, and begins at

The Temple of God.

The temple is literal. The early scenes of this prophecy were laid in the sanctuary of the churches (Chapter 1). At this time the aim of the Beast will be to make Jerusalem the center of ecclesiastical government. The "Temple of God," which shall be profaned and then desolated by the all-conquering world prince (Anti-christ), is assumed to have already been rebuilt.

Three temples so far have been erected on Mt. Moriah, and each in turn destroyed.

- ✓ 1. Solomon's; destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, 588 B. C. (1 Kings 8).
- ✓ 2. Zerubbabel's; pillaged by Antiochus Epiphanes, 168 B. C. (Ezra 3).
- ✓ 3. Herod's; razed to the lowest foundation stone by Titus (John 2:20).

The Temple of God is now a spiritual house built up of living stones (Eph. 2:21). This will be the temple of the New Jerusalem.

Three future temples will be manifested according to prophecy: (1) Anti-christ's, to be rebuilt by restored Judah (2 Thess. 2:4); (2) Christ's, to be erected as the Millennial temple (Ezk. 40); (3) The Temple of God, coming down upon the new earth (Rev. 21).

Seven in all—the perfection of Divine purpose.

It is the temple of Anti-christ—or where he shall sit as God—that is introduced in Chapter 11. Many parts of this modern structure are already prepared. Notice,

An Act of Appropriation.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, 'Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months'" (Verses 1-2).

John has been a spectator through the previous scenes of the Apocalypse. He now becomes an actor. He is instructed to, "Rise and measure." In Ezk. 40:3, a measuring rod is applied to the Millennial Temple, also the city of Jerusalem itself is jointly measured (Zech. 1:16). The acts in both instances indicate God's appropriation. We quote Zechariah: "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem." In these instances, the act of measuring denotes the devotion of these objects to God's **acceptation** and **approval**.

But there is another distinct signification implied in Lamentations: "The Lord hath cast off His altar . . . the Lord hath purposed to **destroy** the wall of the daughter of Zion: **He hath stretched out a line**; He hath withdrawn His hand from destroying" (Lam. 2:7-8).

The act of measuring implies a double significance. It is a **judicial** proceeding. The reed, or rod, is applied to **the temple, the altar and the worshipers**. Consequently, it indicates the reclamation or re-ingrafting of a remnant of Israel (Rom. 11), for the **worshipers** are **included**. There will be pious Jews, who offer sacrifice unto the Lord with **sincere hearts** and will serve the old ritual as nearly as possible with faith anticipating a coming Messiah. These will be acknowledged and their preservation guaranteed—these will constitute the saved out of Jacob, as were formerly mentioned.

The altar and temple are appropriated temporarily for worship, but evidently for eventual desolation. "Judgment to the line" (Is. 28:17) suggests a disciplinary act.

We infer this appropriation of the temple, etc., will, in point of time, somewhat precede the refusal of Israel to worship the Image of the Beast (Chap. 13). Whereby his wrath is incurred, resulting in the flight of those whom Jesus warned; "When ye see the abomination of desolation . . . stand in the holy place; then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains" (Matt. 24:15-21). "For there shall be great tribulation."

God will provide a refuge for those who escape. Under His care, this remnant shall be sheltered for a time, times and a dividing of time" (Rev. 12:14).

Jerusalem to be "Trodden Down."

The outer court, known in Herod's time as the court of the Gentiles, is rejected—unmeasured. This implies the desolating of Jerusalem. "The holy city

shall they tread under foot forty and two months." This is the time synchronizing with the persecution by the wicked king.

These time specifications harmonize:

1. Covenant broken in the midst of seven years or three and one-half years.
2. Forty and two months, Jerusalem desolate.
3. Time, times and a dividing of time.
4. Twelve hundred and sixty days.

The first two describe the desolation of Israel; the second two describe the persecution of Israel's remnant (13:6, 14).

This same epoch defines the decadence of Gentile power, or the filling up of the times of the Gentiles. The casting out of the court of the Gentiles is distinctly a judicial act, as definite and decisive as the hand writing on the wall affirmed the Babylonian Empire was numbered—weighed—divided.

Nothing more convincing as to the correctness of these remarks can be found than the second feature of this chapter, the appearance of the two witnesses.

The Jewish Prophets.

"And I will give power unto My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth." (Verse 3).

Great changes have taken place. The overcomers of the church age are all removed from earth long since; the remnant slain during the fifth seal, too, are under the altar. The great multitude of Palm bearers are gleaned. If there is any doubt, we would remind the reader of the words, "These are the two olive trees and two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth" (Verse 4).

Evidently the seven golden candlesticks have been removed; the church is no more God's official witness—indeed, the whole series of judgments this far have been directed against the apostate church.

God's testimony on earth is symbolized by lamps and light. The oil typifies the Holy Ghost: the lamp represents the human instrumentality. The lamp's form is changed according to dispensations, because God's witness changes through successive ages.

1. There is displayed the seven-branched golden lampstand in Solomon's temple. This, of course, was transferred from Moses' tabernacle, but in both places it speaks of Israel, a complete nation as God's witness. Seven arms connected by one bowl, shows the unity of the testimony, and all the nation represented by seven, the complete number.

2. The nation disrupted. The restoration under Zerubbabel and Joshua was far from complete. There are seven lamps in evidence; the two golden pipes refer to the leaders, Joshua and Zerubbabel, who are the "anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech. 4:14). Israel, as a complete body, is rejected, and these two men are constituted the strength and power of that reformation effected among a remnant. As golden pipes, they were channels of Divine communication in an age dark, and also typical. This prophecy has a wider application, as the same reference is made in Rev. 11:4, concerning the "two witnesses" to come.

3. In the church age, seven candlesticks, without a bowl uniting them, but Christ in the midst as the bond of unity and the source of supply, are set forth. The entire body of Christ, indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, characterizes the witness of **this dispensation of grace.**

4. The Tribulation presents a new witness—two men symbolized by two candlesticks and two olive trees.

Comparing this variety of testimony in successive times, these conclusions seem unavoidable:

1. **The whole house of Israel** cannot be God's anointed witness, until Christ returns and Himself becomes the light of the new Millennial temple. At the

end of seventy weeks the "Most Holy" shall be anointed and He will fill the latter house with glory.

The seventy weeks constitute the interval between the first restoration 445 B. C. and the Millennial Kingdom.

2. The whole church of Christ shall have been removed from earth, before the Great Tribulation sets in, for it would be seriously out of God's order to have seven candlesticks and two candlesticks as symbols in coincidence. Indeed, there is no mention of the presence of seven golden lampstands after the vision of the churches.

3. **The Holy Spirit will not be incorporated** on earth in the last three and one-half years of Tribulation times. The removal of the presence of the Spirit of Christ is implied in the absence of the seven lamps with Christ in the midst, but the Spirit is **poured out again** during the suspension of judgment between the Seals, 6 and 7. (Joel 2). Then comes the darkest hour.

The witnesses are the "two olive trees," indicating these coming ones are **anointed ones**, and the source of might and power **accompanying** their testimony will be an **individual** investiture of power, as they **personally** draw their supply from Christ and the seven-fold Spirit.

Dark, intense, will be the days of these coming messengers, who are sent "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5) (Verses 3-4).

The witnessing of these prophets parallels the **down-treading of the Holy City**. The time of their prophesying, and their official symbol having been shown, let us inquire as to

The Identity of the Two Witnesses.

They are men. The fact of the visitation of death upon them when they shall have finished the work given them to do, and their subsequent resurrection, waives all doubt as to their humanity.

55 They are prophets. This ministry is distinctly described—"they shall prophesy 1260 days."

They are supernaturally endued with power, working for their own preservation, and the destruction of any who would harm them. They are immortal until their work is done. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed" (Verse 5).

They possess Old Testament characteristics. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will" (Verse 6).

These wonders of old recall instantly to memory two men of God. Both were members of the Hebrew race. Both loved their race, and to this day are most Beloved by their race. Can we forget the rugged prophet and his challenge to Israel to assemble on Mt. Carmel and determine the true God? How for three and one-half years by prayer he locked the heavens, and after the nation was persuaded "The Lord, He is God," the heavens in answer to his supplication gave rain? Let us not overlook the fact of a repetition of this miraculous shutting up of the skies for a similar extent of time. The times of Elijah bear more than a striking coincidence to the Greater Tribulation—they are both the scenes of Elijah's presence, power and prayer.

Then let us turn our eyes upon the straitened condition of oppressed Israel in Egypt. Who was sent to them? What mighty wonders did he perform? The signs are repeated here; "Power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with plagues as often as they will."

54 Every Bible reader instantly recognizes these signs bear the trade mark of Moses, the servant of God.

We assume Moses and Elijah shall return—that they are God's "two anointed ones."

Moses and His Times

There are strange facts concerning the death of Moses. It is recorded that he died at 120 years, and his eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated. His body knew no **corruption**. Jude records reference to a dispute concerning the body of Moses. "Yet Michael, the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses." There are two points of interest in this—they are not guesses, but reasonable inferences:

1. Satan holds the power of death (Heb. 2:14). Death holds the power of corruption—decay. Christ's body knew no corruption. God intervened, because Christ's death procured a ransoming right. "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hades, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. 16:10). This was a **grand exception** to the sleeping millions which have succumbed to the fiat of God, "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." We believe **Moses also was an exception**, and the **corruption** of his body was the question in dispute between these contending angels. Why, pray, object to this exception? We admit the certainty of the translation of many, without dying, at the time of the Rapture. May God not preserve the body of Moses for a purpose?

2. We believe, further, it was a contention for **possession** of the body of the great lawgiver. Why did Satan claim the body, unless he desired to circumvent God's future purpose concerning it?

Blessed truth—God's "watchers" guard the ashes of all sleeping saints—but in this instance corruption was baffled. No disease caused the death of Moses. God, Himself, performed the burial rite, and interred the body. "No man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:5-7). Why?

3. He was buried in the land of Moab, beyond the Jordan—a part of Israel's asylum while miraculously fed forty years. Reflection gives rise to a future expectation, and that is, this wilderness over Jordan,

may be the refuge of Israel refugees, after their flight from the Anti-christ. Why was Moses buried where Israel will possibly be hidden, and not like Joseph, whose bones were carried and interred in Canaan? Will the resurrected Moses yet bring the remnant of Israel unto the land of rest?

4. **Moses bears a distinct relation to the coming glory of the Lord.** He and Elijah are presented on the Transfiguration Mount in a scene anticipating the future of the Bridegroom. Many see in this a typical representation of the translated church—Christ's lustrous spirit shining through his garments, and Moses and Elijah in similar glory clad, bespeak **His** majesty and that of the church, in translation and resurrection. But this is rather a **kingdom** portrait—Christ so alludes to it. "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the **Kingdom of God** come with power" (Mark 9:1).

Peter comments upon this and assures us the transfiguration fulfills this promise. "**We were eye-witnesses of His majesty**" (2 Pet. 1:16, 17).

There is a relationship of Moses and Elijah to the Kingdom, that is more than pictorial. The transfiguration can only be wholly explained in the light of these two men, as the two "anointed ones" bearing such a prominent part in turning Israel to the God of their fathers.

As to Moses' times, they bear a typical meaning. Egypt's bondage suggests the cruel reign of the modern world ruler and wicked prince—Anti-christ. Israel was the object of Pharaoh's oppression as they will eventually be the victims of Anti-christ's hate. God delivered Israel **through Moses**, and led them into the wilderness. This is poetically described in Ex. 19:4: "I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto Myself." It is a beautiful thought to remember that God in very similar language, and in perhaps a somewhat similar manner, will show Israel His favor, and succor a remnant from the pursuing hosts of the

Dragon. "To the woman (Israel) were given the wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness" (Chap. 12:14).

As God nourished the emancipated people in the land of Moab, Ammon and Edom, He will surely find them shelter and nourish them for a time, times and a dividing of time in this same wilderness, amid its mountains and deserts.

We feel it is not entirely speculative to place Moses in the lead of this final deliverance of the Chosen seed. While some may object on the ground that it is appointed all men **once** to die, and therefore Moses can not die again, we offer these suggestions for reflection:

1. Some have died the second time—Lazarus, the son of the widow of Nain, etc.

2. Moses' death was unique. He simply breathed out his spirit to God.

3. Some will not die at all. Enoch, and thousands of raptured saints. Is it sufficient evidence that Enoch will be the witness, simply because he did not die? This fact constitutes no argument. He is a type of **saints**, who are promised to be raptured **before the judgment times**, as Enoch was taken **before the flood**. Why spoil this beautiful figure, by bringing Enoch back? He prophesied of judgment. True—so does the church, but the living ones of the church, at the time of Christ's descent into the air, shall not die.

God has some exceptions—Grace accomplishes mighty things. It is a higher law, Sovereign in the working—for this reason, death **appointed** to all is baffled by the triumph of One who discharged its claim.

Elijah and His Times.



With equally positive assurance, yea more, we can place Elijah as one of the two witnesses.

1. It is predicted Elijah shall be sent back. Malachi explicitly says so. "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5).

Israel interpreted and still interprets this literally.

2. John the Baptist, who came in the **spirit and power of Elijah**, says, "**I am not that prophet**" (John 1:21). John was a **forerunner** of Christ; Elijah will be a **restorer of Israel**. The missions are widely different. John **pointed** out the Christ, the Lamb of God; Elijah "shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6).

3. Jesus declared, after the death of John the Baptist, "Elijah indeed cometh and restoreth all things" (Matt. 17:11). True; Jesus said, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come" (Matt. 11:14), the meaning of which is, "If ye are willing to receive it" (Weymouth)—or, if you can discern Elijah's spirit and power, this is a fulfillment (Lu. 1:17). But the above reasons are sufficient to show a literal coming of Elijah himself as truly as has John manifested his spirit and power.

John was not a reincarnation of Elijah. Such a doctrine as **re-incarnation** is unknown to Scripture. The actual return of the translated prophet is one of the most positively assured facts of prophecy.

The counterfeit Elijahs are shadows of the coming reality. Some of God's little ones, who are imposed upon by fraudulent claimants for this post of honor, may be undeceived by carefully noting the following facts:

1. Elijah **that** prophet is to come.
2. He will prophesy to **Israel**.
3. He will appear in **Jerusalem**, that city "spiritually called Sodom," but literally "where also our Lord was crucified" (Verse 8).
4. He will be supported by another witness.
5. They will be able to consume their enemies. "Fire proceedeth out of their mouths" (Verse 5).
6. They will lock the heavens for three and one-half years.
7. They testify during the **great Tribulation**.

8. Therefore, they cannot appear before the **rapture of the church**. All other **Elijahs** are either insane, diabolically inspired or wilful perjurers.

The times of Elijah are prophetic of the coming tribulation. Looking back, we see three and one-half years of drought. Looking forward, we anticipate the heavens again locked for an equal length of time. Elijah is the agent of God in both instances. The test on Mt. Carmel was one prophet against a system. The crucial question was, God or Baal? In the future, the challenge of Elijah again will be, Who is God? God or Anti-christ?

The contest was to be decided by fire. The people said the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. Then it was failure for Baal. The coming conflict will be sharper. The false prophet will produce fire also (13:11). It will be fire versus fire. The decision will not be unanimous, but will nevertheless effect the purpose of God. It will be **decisive**. **The true Israel of God will acknowledge the claims of Jehovah**: the admirers of the Beast will continue their belief in a lie. A goodly company of Israel will return to the faith of their fathers—the majority seem to remain loyal to the Beast and his prophet. At the end, the Beast seems victorious, as he makes war against God's witnesses and overcomes them (7—11).

The utter heartlessness and cruelty of this dark period is seen in the brutal treatment of these witnesses, and congratulations extended because of their death. The dead bodies lie, uninterred, in the streets of the holy city—now holy no more—but corrupt like Sodom. The best commentary on these evil days is Sodom the night before it burned with raining fire from heaven.

At the expiration of three and one-half days—literal days—the scales turn; these prophets are raised and taken up to glory in view of the populace. Great fear follows. The heavens once again mutter their ominous warning. An earthquake shakes the city.

Seven thousand are slain. The remnant are affrighted and give God the glory, but alas, they repent not. The second Woe is announced as past. The seventh Trumpet sounds, but the account of the plagues being poured out is given in Chapter 15. Many other actors in this closing act, must be introduced before we are fully prepared to comprehend the great climax.

In the meantime, the heavenly hosts foresee and rejoice in the consummation of the last Trumpet. So, confident of the outcome, they proclaim "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ" (Verse 15). It is refreshing to look up for a brief glimpse and see the contrast of heaven's bliss, while earth travails amid its woes.

The Elders, the glorified saints, reveal the position of the church above these scenes of strife. As once they acclaimed the right of the Lamb to open the seals, they now anticipate the grand consummation. The details will appear in due time. In the meantime, is this our hope?

CHAPTER XIII.

A VISION OF THE MAN-CHILD.

Describing: The Sun-Clothed Woman in a Glorious Position, and her Painful Condition to give Birth; the Man-Child, in a Perilous Situation, and his Merciful Translation to the Throne; the Red Dragon, in Contention, and his Eventful Precipitation to the Earth; the Symbolic Woman Fleeing Persecution, and her careful Protection from the Dragon. (Rev. 12).

Among the many photographs adorning this wonderful gallery of prophetic symbolism, no series presents a higher degree of excellency, either from a spiritual, or from a literary viewpoint, than the successive symbols of the Sun-clothed Woman, the Mystic Man-child, and the great red Dragon. For this reason, the temptation is to unbridle the speculative fancies, and overleap the boundaries of safe and sane interpretation.

A reverence for God's word, a sense of the fitness of things and a consciousness of the uniformity of Divine purpose in Revelation and Redemption, will do much to keep the course of mind in line with the general design of the Apocalypse.

The first sentence strikes us with a suggestive thought which helps much in formulating a law of exegesis for the entire book; namely, to accept as symbolic what is set for a "sign" and so expressed; accept as literal, that which is not designated as a "sign." This is apparent here. **"There appeared a great wonder (sign) in heaven."** No one could reasonably, in the face of this declaration, look for a literal woman, but at once search the Scriptures to discover what "woman," used in a symbolic sense, signifies. Nor will our search be unrewarded. Both in the Old and New

Testaments, this typical expression is frequently employed. The vision, like that of the witnesses, is **retrospective** in part. Remember the **burden of prophecy** now, is concerning the last three and one-half years of the great Tribulation. What part does the "woman" sustain in these days of the Trumpets? Her relation to the dreadful reign of Anti-christ is that of the persecuted woman. In order that we may understand who the woman is, and what she has done to inspire the Dragon's wrath, the scene begins long **before** the three and one-half years set in.

The days of the woman's persecution only, coincide with the time of great distress. Her flight from the face of the serpent is for a period of 1260 literal days, a time commensurate with the broken covenant (Verses 1, 2, 5).

The features of interest, as readily perceived, are (1) the Woman; the Man-child and "the remnant of her seed"; (2) the great Dragon, his hostility to the man-child, his persecution of the woman, and his war against her seed; (3) the war in heaven, Michael's victory over the dragon, and the overthrow of Satan's throne in the heavens.

The Sun-Clothed Woman

claims first attention. Consider:

1. **Her Exalted Position.** She is unveiled in the heavens, that is, the sign is there, although the woman is in reality upon earth. Heaven is the true place of the **people of God** in the **thought** of God. It is said of the church, He "hath raised us up together and made us sit together in **heavenly places in Christ**" (Eph. 2:6). Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world," hence her source of light is the Sun of Righteousness, although Jesus is still hidden in this age of darkness. The moon is not a body of light in itself and here expresses, possibly, the attempts of the world of darkness to be a luminary. It is an apt figure of the Satanic counterfeit light (?) on the Word of God—the deluded vapor-

ings of cultured reason, without the illumination of the Spirit of Truth. As a "queen of the night," she exercises a witchery that is charming to sentiment, but alas for false teachers full orb'd day with its seried ranks of light will dispel the illusions, and the King of day will banish the delusions emanating from the empress of darkness. In a word, the Sun-clad people of God, reject the so-called light of **human** reason, preferring the sure Word of God. "The moon is under her feet."

2. **Her Glorious Adornment.** "Clothed with the Sun." This strengthens the idea that the sons of God are children of light. God clothes Himself with a garment of light. The true body of believers are arrayed as He in whom "there is no darkness at all."

God's light is truth. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:3).

God's light is life. "Awake from the **dead** and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

God's light is righteousness. "Arise, shine for thy light is come" (Is. 60:1).

God's light is His glory. "And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Is. 60:1).

All this and much more reveals the true people of God, as alive by the Divine Quickener; walking in truth, which emanates from the Source of all true light; as radiating righteousness, even as the Lord Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, is the effulgent brightness of God's glory; and "beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are being changed into the same image."

3. **Her Regal Appearance.** "Upon her head a crown of twelve stars." In purpose she is "crowned with glory and honor." A diadem with glittering stars adorns her brow. There are twelve stars, expressing the fullness of **governmental** glory. There may be an allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb. If the woman signifies God's true Israel of all ages past, including the church of the

present age, and restored future Israel, both are symbolized. The full government of God will be expressed in two peoples, an heavenly (the church), an earthly (Israel), the glorified saints reigning **over** the earth, and Israel **on** the earth. The hope of our calling is very high indeed. We are a royal **kingdom** of priests; we shall be a kingdom of kings.

4. **Her Suffering Condition.** It is such as is common to her kind. She is in travail. Her "hour" has come. The pains and labor of giving birth are spiritual similitudes, not unknown to those who are taught of God. Prayer is compared to travail. The fine quotation from Romans (8:26 W), "But the Spirit pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words" explains the meaning of true intercession. Paul employs the very word, when he says, "My little children, of whom I **travail** in birth again until Christ be **formed** in you" (Gal. 4:19).

Elsewhere he emphasizes the same thought in this way, "Yet (have ye) not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have **begotten** you through the Gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15). Israel brought forth Jesus Christ. In Him, the New Testament church existed. In this sense Israel is the mother of all true believers. The church is taken out of Christ.

The church, the body of Christ—is a spiritual mother. She is chosen to bear fruit. The fruit is the likeness of her kind. The Holy Spirit must effect in us, and then **through** us, what Christ's mediation is making possible for us. Hence the church has fellowship in the travail of Christ's soul and with Him shall be satisfied. Together they—Christ and the church, travail for the bringing forth of the completed body.

As the hour of deliverance approaches—the time of the rapture of the first fruits unto God—these yearnings, intercessions and birth pangs increase. Who does not recognize the importunity is becoming necessarily more intense, to bring forth fruit unto God, as we approach the coming of the Bridegroom?

Nor is the thought of travail confined to the prayer of intercession for the **lost**. There is a special thought involved with reference to the perfecting of the **body of Christ**. Who is ignorant of the necessity of praying for the saints, that they may be "enlightened," may know the "hope of His calling," the "glory of His inheritance in the saints," "the effectual working of His power," "the unity of the faith," "the edifying of the body," etc., etc.? "For the church is to be presented to Christ a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

The pain of the woman no doubt includes all other privations, sufferings incident to her testimony, all of which are very evident, as we trace the history of God's true saints through the ages before Christ was born until the body is taken up.

Especially we should not overlook the purpose for which God has an "ecclesia" on earth. It is not to subdue kingdoms and conquer nations, but to "take out" a people for Christ's name, **to bring forth a "man-child," who is destined to rule the nations.**

All the agonizing prayers of all the saints; all the privations; all the sacrifices, are not in vain. The fifth verse informs us, "She brought forth a man-child . . . and her child was caught up unto God and His throne." Satan has opposed this coming of birth; his hatred through all the years is directed against the first born.

The woman stands for the true Israel of God, both of the Old and New Testaments. The exact nature of the unity of these is a mooted question. That the Old Testament saints have a part in the Superstructure, God's building, does not permit of denial. There are differences of **administration, testimony and calling** we fully admit, and that, to such an extent, we have repeatedly affirmed that the removal of the seven candlesticks marks the close of the New Testament church, as God's official witness on earth. But there is a cer-

tain unity. We are all the children of faithful Abraham, and are called brethren of the ancient prophets. Back of all dispensational ministries, there is an essential oneness. This appears in Ephesians (2:19-22); "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Head of the corner."

In this broad sense, we regard the Woman as the symbol of God's religious system on earth, from the beginning of His testimony until the consummation.

5. **The Safe Delivery of the Man-child is Announced.** Motherhood is the crown of womanhood. Perhaps, for this very reason, religious systems are set forth in symbol, as women.

Four women, as representative classes, are found in the Apocalypse:

1. The Lamb's Wife—the Bride (19:7). This is the glorified church.
2. The Woman Jezebel—the Papacy (2:20).
3. The Sun-clothed Woman—God's Israel on earth (12:1).
4. The Scarlet Woman—the Harlot (17:1). This is the future apostate church.

The marriage state is holy. The harlot state, defiled. The marriage relation acknowledges Divine Headship. The harlot relation is idolatrous fornication. Both states are mystical.

1. "For this cause, shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:31-32).

2. "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth" (17:5).

This demonstrates that religious systems are symbolized by women. They multiply their kind, and propagate truth or error, according to their relation to God, whether it be true or false.

We are considering the **true woman**. Her goal of existence is the bringing forth of fruit unto God. Her first born is a male or Man-child. She also bears a subsequent seed (Verse 17).

The man-child (christ) from Israel
The Mystic Man-Child.

The Man-child is destined to rule the nations. Who then is the Man-child? Let the Scripture answer. It is said of the **Lord Jesus Christ**; "And He shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15); it is also said of the **overcomer**, "And he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27). Thus, the identical expression applied to Christ, is affirmed of the victorious saints. Power over the nations is to be held co-jointly by Christ and His Bride. They are joint-heirs; that is, equal heirs. They occupy the same throne. (Rev. 3:21).

The Man-child is the ruling power over the nations. Not Jesus alone, but in connection with His true body—which body and Head constitute the Man-child, or the Mystic Christ. **In marital relation**, they shall reign. This remarkable statement is made in 1 Cor. (12:12); "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; **so also is Christ.**" The designation of **this complete body, including the Head, is Christ.**

The oneness of Christ and His body is so fully taught, we scarcely need point out the fact, but what is not so well-known, is, that the name Christ is applied to both. The Man-child, we conclude is the Mystic Christ and His body united in resurrection power and glory.

At this point, permit attention to be called to the **three-fold assault of Satan**, the Dragon. He first waits to devour the **Man-child** as soon as it should be born. Second; after the war in heaven, he is cast down to earth; **then**, he persecutes the **woman**. Third; finding the woman hidden, as Isaiah predicted, "Come, My People, enter thou into My chambers and shut thy doors

about thee; hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (20:20), he makes war against the **remnant of her seed**.

The first born has been, since the birth of Christ, the object of Dragon hate, yea, and before. Jesus was in constant jeopardy from the manger to the cross. Later, Christ met the powers of darkness and triumphed over them, as He ascended to the throne. The early Christian martyrs, further, are witnesses to the attempt to extinguish the church. Modern apostasy is but another evidence of the peril of the **church within the church**. We are assured the mystic body will soon be safely translated, even as the glorious Head, who is now on the throne of God.

The effort to apply this "sign" exclusively to modern times, is the result of a failure to grasp the thought of long-standing opposition, against **both the Head and the body**. As the Harlot woman of the seventeenth chapter is mentioned as the **mother of all abominations on the earth**, we conclude her rival, **the true woman**, is the mother of all that is the reverse. The first fosters and gives life to a false religious system, as old as the Tower of Babel. The second runs parallel in time, as the source of all true and holy religion on earth. She is more ancient than the church. She must be **the true Israel of God, all inclusive**.

The Great Red Dragon.

"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born" (Verses 3-4).

Fortunately, there is no room for discussion, as to the meaning of this "sign." As to the personality of the Dragon, the designation is plain, "that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Verse 9).

The dragon "sign" is not a description of the actual countenance and form of Satan. It is a symbolic expression portraying his power—cruel, malignant, murderous. He is called the "red dragon," because he was a murderer from the beginning. The footprints of blood mark his course from the closing of Eden's gates to the opening of the bottomless pit.

1. There is a reference to his original downfall. "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." As this is part of the "sign," the implication is, that the fall of Satan before the creation of man, affected innumerable hosts of other "morning stars" or angels. They were not cast upon the literal earth, but brought to the lowest estate, from the very highest. Such was his power, and it seems the intent is, to impress with the greatness of his power. These fallen ones are under his domain. Many are bound in chains, reserved unto judgment, or as Weymouth renders Jude 6, "prepared unto judgment."

The allusion is historical. But as mention is made of these degraded spirits to show Satan's might, is there not a hint that he will employ these forces in the tribulation times? Indeed, he is described as fallen, and opening the bottomless abyss, and releasing an incomprehensible number of "locusts." (See our discussion of Chapter 9).

Satan has two designations in this chapter, the dragon and the serpent.

As the serpent, he is the deceiver, ever opposing the saints. He accuses them before God, and is called the "accuser of the brethren" (Verse 10).

He is seen chiefly in this character in relation to the war in heaven. (Verse 9.) As the dragon, he is more than a subtle, spiritual power and personality working through countless hosts of wicked spirits, called principalities. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers,

against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12 mar.).

As a dragon, symbolically, he is a **destroyer**, and an **employer of world power**, for he has seven crowned heads and ten horns.

Carefully note these characteristic features:

1. As the **serpent**, he deceives the whole **world**. In this guise, he attacks on the plane of spiritual opposition.

2. As the **dragon**, he has been, and will still remain for a time, the hidden controlling power of **world empire**. "He is the ruler of the darkness of this age." He is the ruling spirit in the children of disobedience. In this sense, he **uses earthly power** to persecute the woman, who remains on the earth after the rapture.

3. The final **expression** of Satanic power will be through the "beast" (Chap. 13). The "dragon" is not the "beast." The "beast" is not the "dragon," but they are most closely related.

The "dragon" is a peculiar symbol of Satanic **spiritual power**, as working through human government, Satanic power is most prominent.

The "beast" expresses "world power." But the war in heaven casts the "dragon" **down to earth**. He then seeks a medium of communication, a human form, through which he may now prosecute open warfare against the **visible body** of saints on the earth. He finds such a habitation in the "man of sin," whom he promotes to be the head of the empire—the ten-kingdom confederacy.

The ten kings, who already exercise Satan's will, in the same manner as all kings have, since the world empire was founded, each and all surrender their allegiance to this **eleventh king, Satan's man**. The result is the strange combination of the "beast," which is a **threefold power**, when perfected.

1. The "beast" is the fourth empire revived. This is the Roman Empire; its broken fragments reunited under ten kings.

2. The "beast" is a man, whose personality absorbs the empire and the kings so completely, his will is expressed in all and through all, so that **he is the absolute law**. Hence, the man and the empire are so identified, **that the man is the "beast."**

3. The "**dragon**" gave him his power and his seat and great authority (13:2). As the will of its empire is one man, so the man is the **human expression of the "dragon."**

Satan's power, therefore, is ultimately exercised through the Anti-christ, through the fourth empire. We have next the picture of the **world power; the "dragon" had seven heads—crowned with seven diadems.**

The kingdom was taken from Israel about 587 B. C. The Gentile monarchy then takes its place in prophecy. Satan has exercised lordship through the 2,502 years of this dominion. It began with an image of **gold**, and must close with the image of the **beast**. Idolatry, which is demon worship, has been its chief development. Satan, therefore, possesses this kingdom and will continue to do so, until Christ establishes His kingdom on earth. This is shown by a stone falling upon the feet of the great image, seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and breaking it to pieces. The image is the portraiture of Gentile times (Daniel 2).

The heads denote universal earthly power. There are seven, implying **dispensational fullness**, or seven great kingdoms. Hence, the dragon holds complete imperial sway over all earthly kingdoms until the prophetic cycle of 2,520 years is completed.

The heads are crowned. In Chapter 13, **the horns are crowned.** This **transfer of crowns** is significant. The first contemplates an **earlier** stage. The second, the **very latest** development of the Roman Empire. The former suggests governmental power, as centered

in the dragon. This is the present condition, previous to the rapture of the Mystic Christ (the Man-child). The latter shows the coronation of **ten kings** who "receive power one hour (a brief season) with the beast."

The dragon has ten horns. The horns correspond to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. 2). They are the ten kingdoms to be confederated before the Anti-christ shall arise. The fourth beast Daniel saw arise from the sea, had ten horns. After these arose a "little horn," which waxed great (Dan. 7). This, the eleventh horn, eventually becomes the world Emperor, and the ten kings become his confederates.

Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the Confederation with the "Prince" as seventh head, constitute the seven heads.

The horns uncrowned, as seen on the dragon, represent ten kingdoms, ruled by these ten kings, during the time of an alliance formed previous to the Satanic possession of the "Man of Sin." Satan is the first cause of the present European conflict, which will sooner or later lead up to a confederation. There may be a still future war necessary to coalesce the Roman Empire. In this Satan will be an **unknown dictator**, and will draft the terms of a Roman Alliance.

The horns crowned, as seen on the beast, are the same kingdoms at a somewhat **later** period, when Satan's seat is on earth, and these kings become worshipers of the beast, and are his confederates. At which time, as seen before, Satan's **manifest** will is carried out by the beast and his ten supporters.

The Heavenly War.

62 "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth and his angels were cast out with him" (Verses 7-9).

This is an engagement of long standing. True, the presence of Michael and the armies of God, indicate the **last stage of this conflict**, nevertheless, this war dates from a remote period.

From time to time, we catch glimpses through the lens of Divine revelation. Through the centuries, Satan has been on the watch to destroy the Man-child.

Did he anticipate in Abel the promised seed and seduce Cain to commit the first murder? Pharaoh was instigated to destroy the first born, and Herod, too. These are examples of dragon power, or Satan working through world **authority**. But there is another means of assault—spiritual.

Daniel's prayer recalls the resistance of powers of darkness, calling for the support of Michael and his angels (Dan. 10:13). The contention concerning the body of Moses is a further instance (Jude 9). Paul sheds much light in his description of the spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6.

The church has a **heavenly calling**. She is to be "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). We are waiting for the completion of that call. In the meantime, our **standing** is in heaven. Paul prayed that the Ephesian believers might know the hope of their calling.

In the heavenlies:

1. We are blest with all spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3).

2. Christ, our Head, is raised and seated (Eph. 1:20).

3. We, who were dead in sins, are raised and seated in Christ (Eph. 2:6).

4. Principalities and powers are learning God's manifold wisdom through the church (Eph. 3:10).

5. Christ is pouring forth gifts for the edification of the mystical body (Eph. 4:8-13).

6. We wrestle against principalities and powers and wicked spirits. These would dispute our ground, hinder prayer, keep us aloof from God and defeat our experimental knowledge of God.

The last stage of this heavenly war is described in this chapter. Many have been the earlier conflicts; and the victories over the "accuser of the brethren" have been repeatedly gained **through the blood of the Lamb and by the Word of testimony** (Verse 11). Jesus was raised and defeated the host of evil spirits, **on the ground of His shed blood**. The saints, too, will be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and take their places on the judgment thrones. Satan cannot prevent the birth and rapture of the Man-child, but he seems determined to pursue, and if possible, wrest them from the safekeeping of God and the Lamb. His accusations are of no avail. **They are overcomers. The blood is still their plea** (Verse 11). Their confession and loyalty to Him, who loved them, prevails against the powers of darkness. **On the contrary**, the saints shall "judge angels" (1 Cor. 6:3). Accordingly, it is decreed that the heavens shall be cleansed of all these spiritual forces of evil. War is declared. **Redemption's rights are to be enforced**. Michael's angelic legions beset the Devil and his demon hosts.

Michael's defense. This distinguished archangel is one of God's chief princes. Five times in the Bible, he is presented and always in defense of Israel (Dan. 12:1). Michael is now to "stand up, that great prince that standeth for the children of thy people (Israel)." The great Tribulation is about to burst upon this chosen people.

The ministry of angels is generally accepted. But they too, have much to do in determining the issue of earth's battles and the development of national policies. Michael's triumph over the Prince of Persia shaped the future destiny of Israel. (Dan. 10:13.)

In this final war, the preservation of a remnant of Israel will be made sure. The flight of the woman and her **preservation** will be a result of the defense of this great prince.

The casting out of Satan; and his future throne on earth, is the glorious victory for those who dwell in the **heavens**, but "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth

and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Verse 12).

The casting down of Satan does not necessarily immediately follow the rapture.

The Flight of the Woman.

Satan finds a medium—a man, through whom he works his purposes. The **woman** now must suffer the consequences of his wrath. This is the time Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel.

The devout Jews, who are familiar with prophecy, will flee for safety. The **wilderness** becomes the refuge, as in days of old. It is quite remarkable that of **three small countries**, it is said, "These shall escape out of his hand—**Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon**" (Dan. 11:41). Will this be the sanctuary, where God will hide His people from the destroying power of the dragon and the beast?

God bears her (as on eagle's wings) to this place of safety (Deut. 32:11-12) as He did in the past. God found Jacob, as his portion, "In a waste howling wilderness; He led him about; He instructed him **He kept him as the apple of His eye.**"

In the wilderness, "He set a table before them" at the beginning of their national history. Thither will He carry them, once more. In this same desert land Elijah was sustained, for the Lord commanded the ravens to feed "His fleeing prophet **'there.'**" Obadiah cared for other prophets, whom he hid in a cave, in this same refuge of Elijah.

Just **how** God will succor and feed the persecuted woman, we cannot exactly say. Isaiah throws some light upon this deeply interesting question: "His place shall be the **munition of rocks; bread** shall be given him; his water shall be sure." "The inhabitants of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty; they provided with their bread **him that had fled; for they**

fled from swords, from drawn swords, and from the bent bow, and from grievousness of war" (Is. 21:14-16).

How much plainer are the words of Jesus in the light of these statements: "When ye see the abomination of desolation, stand in the Holy Place; . . . then let them which be **in Judea flee to the mountains.** . . . Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days. But **pray** ye that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath day." How difficult for mothers to make their escape. **A Sabbath day's journey is but one mile.** "**For then shall be great tribulation**" (Matt. 24:15-22).

The **inhabitants of Tema** are supposedly the children of the desert. Will God move their hearts to assist His banished people over the desert?

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood" (Verse 15).

The dragon, through Anti-christ the beast, will send armies in pursuit. A similar detachment of Syrian troops were sent after the fugitives in the time of the Maccabees. This is the symbolic meaning of the "flood." But a calamity befalls these avenging troops. God found a way to overthrow Pharaoh and his chariots in the Red Sea, and compelled him to let His people go. Now the **earth** helps the woman. Perhaps an earthquake engulfs these destroying enemies of God's people.

Baffled in these attempts first against the Man-child and then against the woman, the Dragon declares war on the "remnant of her seed." Later, we shall touch upon this "**war on the saints.**"

What a message this wonderful chapter speaks to the heart of God's **faithfulness!** His **covenant word** spoken unto Abraham, and the **covenant blood** of His Son are both remembered.

When we are summoned to appear at the judgment seat of Christ, the enemy is in the heavens. The works we have done in the body, as stewards of the

Great Husbandman, shall be judged. Satan appears to be present. This will be an open court. Every work shall be fully tested by fire. Satan will file accusations, but "who can lay any charge to God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

Satan will stand to resist, as he did Joshua (Zech. 3:1). But the blood of the Lamb will plead our cause respecting all that was against us. There will we be confessed before the Father and the holy angels. The enemy of the race is silenced forever. Will not Jesus speak of this translated body, "Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?" Surely they overcame. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Verse 11).

Of Israel we have spoken. The covenant concerning this people is seen working out preservation in tribulation. The full glory of this chosen people will be seen in the Millennial dawn.

How irresistibly pressing is the warning to accept the gracious deliverance awaiting the mystic body, rather than be exposed to the great Tribulation!

The world is fast moving toward the goal of its Godless ambition. The days described herein are not in the dim, distant future—they are at our very door. "Watch ye, therefore, and pray ye, that ye may be counted worthy to escape all these things."

CHAPTER XIV

THE VISION OF ANTI-CHRIST.

Projecting upon the Horizon of the Future; A Strange Alliance; A Combination of Power, Imperial, Satanic and Human; A confederation, Standing in Blasphemous Defiance of God, Winning Adoration Through Reliance Upon Anti-Christian Super-naturalism. (Chap. 13:1.)

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Prophecy projects upon the horizon of the future a commanding figure. He masquerades in so many guises and disguises, it is not surprising many are at a loss to recognize him. Some point out three men as necessary to fulfill his mission; namely, the King of the North, or the Assyrian, the World Emperor, or the Beast, and the Anti-christ. Our contention is that **one man** completely fills up the prophetic measure. His name is Anti-christ, as he seeks to antagonize Christ (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7). This name occurs nowhere else in the Scripture. He has many names, elsewhere employed; such a variety, in fact, some find it difficult to apply them to one individual. He is a man (2 Thess. 2:3). He is the "man of the earth" (Ps. 10:18); and also, "the son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3). He is symbolized as "the Beast," whose number is the number of a man (13:18).

Many others might be profitably mentioned:

The Avenger (Ps. 8:2).

The Prince that shall come (Dan. 9:26).

The Little Horn (Dan. 7:8).

The Little Horn (Dan. 8:9).

King of Tyrus (Ezek. 28:12).

Prince of Tyrus (Ezek. 28:2).

Lucifer, Son of the Morning (Is. 14:12).

King of Babylon (Is. 14:4).

The Assyrian (Ezek. 31:3).
The Idol Shepherd (Zech. 11:17).
That Wicked (one) (2 Thess. 2:8).
The Spoiler (Is. 16:4).
King of Fierce Countenance (Dan. 8:23).
The Lawless One (2 Thess. 2:8 R. V.).
The Treacherous Dealer (Is. 21:2).
The Willful King (Dan. 11:36).
The Desolater (Dan. 10:27).
Another (Jno. 5:43).
The Breaker (Mich. 2:13).
King of the North (Dan. 11:40).

In the chapter before us, he is introduced as the head and heart of the fourth world Empire in its last manifestation.

This "Beast" is to be considered in a threefold aspect:

1. As he rises from the sea—a **world Power**.
2. He bears the number of a man—a **Man**.
3. As he receives power from the dragon—a **Satanic Manifestation**.

This is a strange complexity of **power** and **personality**, a strange co-mingling of **human** and **spiritual forces**, a mysterious combination of **political** and **religious** influences. If we study each one as **separate**, and then regard them as **merged** into one being, whose number is the **number of man**, much that seems inexplicable will be solved.

The Beast—A World Power

There are two visions of world supremacy recorded in the book of Daniel. The first, an image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. This symbol, expressing the **external** nature of Gentile supremacy, was the dream of the world empire builder, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. Reference to Daniel, the second chapter, will show the interpretation was this: the head of gold corresponds to Babylon, the first empire; the shoulders of silver to the Medo-Persian, the sec-

ond world power; the loins of brass to Greece, the third supreme government; the legs of iron to Rome, the fourth universal empire; and the feet with ten toes, a **confederation** of the broken Roman Empire, but the same fourth power **revived**.

In Daniel seven, the same powers are presented in a **series** of night visions. The first was symbolized by a "lion"; the second by a "bear"; the third by a "leopard," and the fourth by a beast, dreadful and terrible.

These symbols picture the **internal** nature of these kingdoms as ferocious, cruel and destructive. How could they be otherwise, when Satan, the dragon, is their superior ruler, although hitherto working in secret?

All these kingdoms "arose up out of the sea." Without doubt, the vision of the **fourth beast** corresponds to the great beast of Rev. 12. Both visions present the Roman Empire, as a **revived and unified earthly power**—the last manifestation of **Gentile Supremacy**.

The **re-organization** of this empire will apparently be effected in a perfectly natural way. In the time of its reconstruction, there will be no presence of a **manifested Anti-christ**.

Wars will drive Europe and Western Asia, and Egypt and the various dependencies to form an alliance for mutual protection. No doubt the papacy will occupy a prominent place in these proceedings. The exact basis of this confederation will be revealed in its time.

The Roman Empire will be as Daniel saw it, fully consolidated **before** the "little horn," the blasphemous emperor comes upon the scene, for he sees ten horns. "The ten horns are ten kings that shall arise; and **another shall rise after them**." (Dan. 7:24). The ten kingdoms are yet indistinguishable. Some sixty-five different enumerations of political powers have been selected, according to Sir Robert Anderson. This in itself is strong argument against **historical** interpretation.

So far then, we see the world power part of this composite picture. But there is a further step along the ordinary lines of things political. This will be the rise of the eleventh horn. He comes as a Prince (Dan. 9:26). His birth will not be supernatural, as many affirm. He will be obscure at the outset of his career. He appears as the Prince of Tyrus (Ezek. 28:2).

Before we consider the "**Beast**" as a man, let us, as rapidly as possible, follow the course of the

Man as an Ordinary Man.

The early days of the man of sin are not notable, beyond other characters of whom we have historic record.

His birth will be ordinary. There is no hint he shall be of princely blood, although that is possible. Some of the church fathers wrote of him anticipating his advent into the world as Satan's offspring—a travesty on the incarnation, but this seems highly improbable, as we hope to show.

He will be a **petty** king, a **little** horn. He will have no place among the ten great kings until he wins it by right of conquest.

He will spring up in one of the four divisions of the ancient Grecian Empire. The "little horn" of Daniel 8 is the same as the "little horn" of Daniel 7. Upon the death of Alexander the Great, the kingdom was divided and given to four of his generals. The divisions were Syria the north, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Egypt the south. This "little horn" grows up from one of these four kingdoms. Appearances are in favor of Syria. He is called the "Prince of Tyrus" (Ezek. 28:2), and Tyre is a city of Syria. This would also account for him as "King of the North" (Dan. 11:40). The "little horn" of Daniel 8 has an application assuredly to Antiochus Epiphanes, the ancient oppressor of Israel and defiler of the Temple. (Dr. Pusey. Daniel Page 93).

But Daniel mentions some features he did not fulfill, such as these:

1. Exaltation above every God.
2. Blasphemy against the true God.
3. Contempt for all existing religions.
4. Disregard for the desire of women.
5. Dishonors the God of his fathers.

We conclude this notorious prince is but a **shadow** of the modern desolater, who is to come.

We notice further, this budding prince waxes great toward the South (Egypt) and toward the East (Babylon), and toward the goodly pleasant land (Palestine) (Dan. 8:9). His moving eastward and gaining a victory in the valley of the Euphrates would explain his title "King of Babylon" (Is. 14:4). His success in the **pleasant land** is borne out by a covenant which the "Prince shall confirm for one week" (Dan. 9:27).

We must not overlook the fact that this is not a **religious transaction, but a political treaty**. A Jewish state is founded. The conquering prince **up to this time** makes no religious pretensions other than to ingratiate himself with the **Apostate church**. This covenant does not imply an acceptance of this rising ruler as Christ's opponent, on the part of Israel.

He later overthrows three of the ten kings, and assumes a dictatorial position (Dan. 7:20)

The Beast—A Man

(a) It is about the middle of the **week**. He now makes a southern invasion, winning a great victory (Dan. 11:28), but upon a second invasion is humbled by the King of the South (Dan. 11:29). The death of the Price of Tyrus is foretold in Ezekiel (28:1-10). They shall bring thee **down to the pit** and thou **shalt die the death of them that are slain** in the midst of the seas." Such a death in the hands of the "uncircumcised" is not the death he later dies, when he is **again** destroyed by Christ coming in flaming fire.

This time corresponds with Satan's downfall—the star falling from heaven. The keys of hades are given to Lucifer, the fallen star. He opens the abyss. It seems clear he temporarily holds the power of life and death. Does he raise the **spirit** of this fallen prince and resurrect his body? It seems the most probable solution of the changed career of the man of sin.

Several reasons can be mentioned for holding this view:

1. It accounts for **his change of policy**.
2. It explains the **persecution** of Israel for the remaining three and one-half years.
3. It shows his animus in defiling the Holy Place.
4. It makes plain why the "beast" is said to arise from the **bottomless pit** (17:8).
5. It solves the enigma of the "beast" "that **was** and is not, even he is the eighth and of the seven" (17:11).
6. It describes the meaning of "one of the heads, as it were wounded unto death" and his deadly wound was healed.
7. It further discloses the manner of Satanic possession he henceforth manifests.
8. It gives a **resurrection** as a credential to deceive the world with this man.
10. A vile person is predicted to arise in the "estate" of the humbled prince (Dan. 11:21).
11. The **prince** of Tyre dies, Afterward the King of Tyre dies. The deaths are different and the strange union of Satan comes between (Ezek. 28).
12. If it is objected that Christ says, "I have the keys of death and of hades," remember the key of hades is **given** to the "fallen star" and he opens the abyss (9:1).

From henceforth, the man is Satan's man. He is head of the Empire. The ten kings surrender their authority submissively to do his will. He is the Empire and the world's kingdoms are his.

(b)

The Beast—a Satanic Expression

From the beginning the temptation of the race has been "Ye shall be as gods," (Gen. 3:5). The ultimate goal of Satan is reached in the man who sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God (2 Thess. 2:4).

Failing to usurp God's exalted position, his ambition has known no relaxation to be worshiped. The price he offered to pay Christ was "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," if the Son of God would but bow and worship him. He then and there affirmed that power and glory "**was delivered unto me and to whomsoever I will I give them.**" It is needless to say the heart of Christ did not respond to this temptation, although He knew His path to the throne was by way of the cross (Lu. 4:5-7). He also predicted "another" would accept this proposition (John 5:43), and it is certain his acceptance would be on the **same terms**. Peter, perhaps escaped this snare also—"Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee," are the words of Jesus to the impetuous disciple.

We are not surprised then to find one man, so abandoned to the will of the arch enemy of God and man, who becomes Satan's dupe, and surrenders every power of his being to him, as completely as Jesus Christ devoted Himself to do the will of the Father and was led, inspired and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

He is really an **incarnation** of Satan, but not from birth, as has been suggested. The travesty on the God-man, rather seems to find resemblance **from** the time of the **resurrection** of this seventh head of the Roman Empire.

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast" (Verse 3).

Anti-christ as the seventh head, first rules as an ordinary man, but is "**wounded unto death.**" After his resuscitation, as the medium of the dragon, he is the

channel through whom the worship of Satan becomes the world religion. This explains why in Chapter 17 the beast is called the "eighth and of the seven." The last manifestation of the Roman Empire is quite different from that expressed by the confederation of the ten kings. It is now a **world power** possessing all the elements of the first three beasts of Daniel; the lion, the bear, and the leopard. Whatever royalty, ponderous weight and subtle military characteristics were conspicuous in the three, are now **blended** in the fourth beast.

No doubt, this man will possess the colossal dreams of Nebuchadnezzar and execute them by making winged campaigns afar; he will have the organizing ability of Darius and Cyrus and handle great armies with ease; he will be a greater genius than Alexander the Great (even from the beginning of his career, otherwise, how can he rise to fame from obscurity?) And the strength of the iron of Rome will remain in his kingdom. He will break in pieces, as the Caesars, and will extend the borders of the Empire. Daniel informs us **his kingdom** "shall devour the whole earth" (Dan. 7:23). It is further:

A Spiritual Power, which explains the solidarity and unity among the broken kingdoms, when Satan, the dragon, gives him "his power, his seat and great authority." But all this power both **Imperial** and **Super-human**, converges in a man.

A Man Power. The capacity of man is not to be overlooked. Consecrated talent has been used much by the Lord. Moses, Daniel and Paul are typical illustrations of men of culture, refinement and genius, who under God have changed the course of governments, and moulded the destiny of nations; one of them was legislator for all time.

As a man, Anti-christ will be Satan's "masterpiece," a product of modern intellectualism, socialism, culture, militarism—in a word, the very acme of that perfection known as modern progress. He will possess originality. "He will think to change times and laws (Dan.

7:25). He will be a **diplomat**. "Through his **policy**, also, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand" (Dan. 8:25). No finer stroke of genius will be exhibited than the confirmation of a covenant with many of Israel (Dan. 9:27). His support in rebuilding the Jewish temple will go far in winning the good will of the founders of the modern Jewish state. He will also handle apostate Christendom with care, indeed sustaining the Harlot Woman, until she is of service to him no more (17:15). Thus as a triple unity of power, **human, governmental and Satanic**, he becomes the **man of the hour, the great emancipator** the nations anticipate—the ideal man—the saviour of the race. But alas how little they as yet know of his true calling and character. This becomes apparent as we contemplate the "beast" from another point of view.

The Beast—as God.

(c) How startling the statement! How impossible of fulfillment, many will urge. But is this not the word of God? And are we not facing this impious imposition in this very chapter? Read these concise descriptive sentences and mark their significance:

"And all the world wondered after (admired) the beast" (Verse 3).

"And they worshipped the beast" (Verse 4).

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God" (Verse 6).

Satan's ostensible purpose is to give the world a new religion. This religion will resemble the Christian religion as much as possible. It will be a **deception**, otherwise the apostate Jews and Gentiles could not be drawn within its tentacles.

The present drift of religious thought interprets to a degree the essence of the new religion. The spread of Christian Science, New thought and New Theology, all of which tend to eliminate God, His Son and the Holy Ghost, are indicative of the future design. These fanciful theories are built upon God's Word. They do not deny His Word, but rather so **pervert its**

meaning, the deceived devotees believe they are teaching the Word of Truth. The converging point of all these is—the inherent divinity of man. Man will eventually find his mind has been in error, as concerns his fallen condition. The man of sin will be the worshipful ideal of self-evolved divinity. He will be the expression of the new God **idea**, and so will be the object of worship. To fully clear the way, he will counterfeit the religion of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

With resurrection as a first claim, he is emboldened to blaspheme God—his name—His tabernacle. Blaspheme means to “make thyself God.” So the Jews **charged** Christ with blasphemy because “He made Himself God.”

Not alone must the knowledge of God and those that dwell in heaven be eliminated from the mind of the race, but all contesting religion must be effaced.

“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Verse 7).

His attempt to destroy the true “woman” has been noticed. From the escape of God-fearing Jews, he maintains a continued policy of war against the remnant of her seed; those that keep the commandments of God (Israelites) and the testimony of Jesus (Christians). These are involved “in the war with the saints.” The witnessing of Elijah and his comrade parallels this infamous reign **almost** three and one-half years. There will be a constant turning of hearts to God, and in numbers sufficient to encourage the faithful of God to make armed resistance. But they are overcome by the Beast.

“He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (Verse 10).

It is not yet time for the victory of God. “**The patience and faith**” of the saints is more precious to Him, than prowess on battle fields. Their future glory de-

pend on victory over the Beast, through spiritual weapons, rather than carnal. Their reward is found in Rev. 20:4: "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, **which had not worshiped the beast . . .** and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

A False Trinity

67 "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Verses 11-12).

This Trinity will consist of Satan as **God**, Anti-christ, the counterfeit of Christ, as **Christ**, and the false prophet, a travesty on the **Holy Spirit**.

The first two have been discussed at length, so that the force of the claim, as regards the "man of sin" and the dragon must be clear to all.

A third personality comes on the scene. He is introduced as "**another beast.**" Symbolized as a **beast**, he is like his predecessor, he is a **man** and a system. The prophet is a **person**, and he represents a system of doctrine; he advocates a religious economy. He will teach that Anti-christ is God. "**He will give all his power to the first beast.**" He will enforce the **worship** of an image of the **first** beast. He will support all the claims of Anti-christ by miracle.

He has power. Two horns emblemize this power. The horns are lamblike. They are less ferocious in appearance than the ten horns of the Empire beast. We conclude, they signify **spiritual power**—the element of the **supernatural**. It has been suggested by a splendid writer, these horns are symbols of **Spiritism and Supernaturalism**. It is certain he will employ myriads of demon spirits as appears more than once in the Apocalypse (9:1-3; 16:13). It is emphatically stated he will perform great signs and wonders.

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live” (Verses 13-14).

Satan has always utilized religious supporters. Man is a religious being. Humanity always has and ever will **worship something**. It is impossible to banish all religion from the earth. The French Revolution was a miniature of the great tribulation. Churches were closed, altars thrown down. But in a short time the mad populace were devotees of a shameless woman, who was paraded through the streets of Paris, as the Goddess of Liberty. This was the deification of an idea, personified in a human, and she of the baser sort. This is a splendid illustration of the final religion of the Beast. A man, as God, will be worshiped. He will be the expression of a **principle**, a **concept**, which is deified and will be approached through an image.

Jannes and Jambres were called to substantiate Pharaoh's refusal to release Israel. Their responsibility was to **discredit** God's claims upon His enslaved people, by working counter miracles. They were permitted to duplicate signs to a certain extent. They were held in restraint, when it became a question of **producing life**.

The False Prophet will be permitted to produce a **counterfeit of life**. Hence his power is exceedingly beyond any preceding false prophets.

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Verse 15).

This is his **supreme** miracle. He challenges the miracles of Moses and Elijah, “by calling down fire from heaven on earth in the sight of men.” But his **master stroke** is a **speaking image**.

The image on the plains of Dura was an object of adoration on the part of all nations.

The attractions of pomp, splendor and music were enough to prostrate all the populace. Fear of the furnace was sufficient to cause all to bow the knee, save the faithful Hebrew three.

This modern occasion will present some unique features in addition to the glamour of worldly glory and sensual music.

1. **The image is to be erected in the temple of God**, the new temple we have spoken of in our notes on Chapter 11. Jesus locates the image, as standing in the **Holy place** (Matt. 24:15). Antiochus Epiphanes was a sacrilegious profaner. He offered a sow on the altar of the burnt offering. The Anti-christ and his coadjutor outdistance even this. An idol is established where the **Shekinah** glory once dwelt.

2. **The image is given life**—that is, **spirit**. We are not to consider the image is animated, but **spirit** (pneuma) is imparted. This is a great **spiritualistic** triumph. The simple explanation is that a **demon** speaks blasphemous utterances through the immobile lips of stone. The world will listen to this oracle. Do we doubt it? Myriads of intelligent people **today** give heed to the messages heard in spiritualistic seances with a credulousness that raises no question. This foul spirit dares to deny Jesus Christ, and exalt the impious pretender, Anti-christ.

3. **The worshipers of the image** will consolidate into a gigantic society. This society touches all phases of life and uses the immense organization to control social status. It will dominate capital and labor. Producer and consumer alike will be helpless in the tentacles of this octopus. "No man can **buy or sell**" who is not initiated. We know something of trusts and unions. We know the temptation within each to plunder and to destroy. But against this grand centralization of organized strength none shall have the temerity to lift a voice.

4. **The worship of the image** and the membership in the system is to be enforced by the death penalty. And he will cause "that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

When we reckon upon the vacillating tendencies of most people, for the majority prefer to be with the popular side, we are quite confident the opponents of the new system will be a small minority. When the force of appeal to men is taken into account, arising from the jeopardizing of bread, the result of this decree will not be difficult to forecast.

When it comes to a question of life, there is one truth the devil uttered once upon a time, and he will use it to the limit, "All that a man hath will be given for his life."

Add to this the pomp and glory of the world, which surely will open its coffers in support. Can pen describe the grandeur of the worship as its devotees behold its priestly ranks clad in vestments of scarlet and gold? Compare the Vatican processional and a dim perspective will dawn upon us. The devil has pre-empted the talents of art, music, sculpture and the drama. These are being prostituted for a purpose. All will be called into requisition.

Music, awe, mystery, glory, wealth, culture, spiritism described on paper are inadequate expressions of the devil's religion. Combine the orchestral ability of the Russian-Greek church; the weirdness and mysticism of Paganism; the display and munificence of the Papal system; the sophistry and intellectualism of Buddhism and Christian Science; then add the miraculous wonders of Spiritism. Blend the whole into a drunken, licentious orgy, as was held on the night Belshazzar was slain, when they drank from the golden vessels of the Lord; then multiply these assemblies over the world, when every church edifice of note will be defiled by such gatherings, and this image is duplicated, possibly in every assembly, for there are count-

less demons to give spirit to as many images as there are cities, and you have an imperfect sketch of the new religion of the two Beasts.

5. **The Beast has a mark**—a sign. All the adherents must bear this seal on their hands and foreheads.

This is another travesty on God. It will probably be a mimicry of the seal of the Holy Spirit.

The seal gives right to do the work of merchandise. It preserves life and brings the support of the religious, social, commercial, military system to all who wear the brand.

But it does not exempt from judgment, death and the lake of fire. It secures life against any danger from the system, but all its worshipers are guilty of the blasphemous sin against the Holy Ghost. Their doom is foretold by the flying angel (14:10).

The mark is **666**. God's number is 7. Man is incomplete. God is perfect in character and in governmental glory. Man falls short. He may aspire to be as God, but no process of raising numbers to higher powers will ever make 6 equal 7. 6 times 6 is 36. Multiply, divide, subtract or add, the result always falls short of the Divine number, and the result always contains a 6.

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six" (Verse 18).

Time will make all things clear. Of this we are sure, they that are Christ's need not fear. His number is the number of a man.

God is sealing by His Spirit today **against** that day. The saints are promised to be gathered before the **manifestation** of the "man of sin," and therefore before the appearance of his prophet.

The Prophet's Identity.

There is not only a possibility, but a **probability**, that the coadjutor of the first beast will be an Apostate Jew. Some very sincere and conservative teachers

regard any attempt to identify the False Prophet as purely speculative. We suggest a careful perusal of Psalm 109. The Scripture referred to is an imprecatory Psalm. It is a prophetic prayer, representing the Saviour as petitioning the Father in the days of His Flesh. Five verses embrace His rejectors. From the sixth, God's curse is invoked upon His betrayer.

All doubt concerning Judas being the subject of the twenty-three curses mentioned will be removed by comparing the eighth verse: "Let another take his office," with Acts 1:20, "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and his bishopric let another take." Now, observe the sixth verse: "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand."

During the evening after the Passover Supper was celebrated, Judas went out, "**Satan having entered into him.**" Of no other man has such a record been written. Within twenty-four hours he had betrayed his Lord, received the price of blood, suffered remorse, brought the blood money back to the priests, and gone out and hanged himself. There is no record of a burial granted him.

It seems his body fell from the place he had hanged himself. This record is written in Acts 1:18: "Falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Was this because the body was suspended until corruption had set in? If he died immediately, who is the "wicked man set over him"? And when is Satan to stand at his right hand?

The only answer we are able to offer is the **very** scene we are studying in Revelation 13.

Is it rash to conceive Judas will be the **False Prophet**? Is he not called the "Son of perdition," and is it not stated that "he went to his own place," and also, "Let his habitation be desolate"? (Acts 1:20.) Jesus called him **Satan**.

We are not inclined to the view that Judas will be the Anti-christ.

1. On the ground that a **Wicked Man** is set over him.

2. The Anti-christ rises an ordinary man in Syria.

3. All the points we have presented in favor of the career of the "man of sin" in its earlier stages offset the idea of Judas as the Coming Prince.

If it is urged that the Jews would not accept a Messiah who is not a Jew, attention is called to these facts:

1. The covenant with Israel confirmed is **not** a confession that the Prince is the Messiah. It is a **political** guarantee of national rights. At this time there is no evidence that Anti-christ makes superior claims. Furthermore, the covenant is confirmed "with **many**," not all Israel.

2. The worshipers of God, appropriated by the Lord, true keepers of the commandments, **never** worship the Beast. Neither do the 144,000. All that worship the Beast have their portion in the lake of fire, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

3. The **unbelieving** Jews will not expect a Messiah, and will be as readily deceived by the new system as the Gentiles.

Others urge Daniel's statement in objection, "He shall not regard the God of his fathers."

But nothing has been said in all this chapter to prevent the supposition that the last Emperor himself may be a Jew, also.

Be it far from the writer to make extravagant or immodest claims. The purpose in mind is to **suggest**, rather than **affirm**, in regard to minor matters.

Enough is written to substantiate the important issues.

The goal of the race is **Christ** or **Anti-christ**. Two spirits are gone forth as supreme in their respective domains. The Holy Spirit of God witnesses to Jesus Christ, as the incarnate God, dying to save the world, resurrected as the seal of Divine acceptance of the Redemption work of the cross, and coming again. This is the **mystery of Godliness** (1 Tim. 3:16): "And with-

out controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

The revelation of Christ—His manifested presence and all the saints with Him—is the end of this mystery.

The **spirit of evil**, not a principle, but a **personality**, is secretly corrupting those who resist the Holy Spirit. He is witnessing to Christ in a thousand ways. This secret power alienating men’s hearts from God, prejudicing them against Christ or friendship for the Nazarene, while undermining faith in His deity is the **spirit of Anti-christ**. John says, “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world” (1 John 4:2-3).

The latter times must witness the combination of all evil systems, and the apostate Church, in one gigantic trust; one great man shall be its sovereign head. He will attain universal power on earth. He will make peace with Israel. He will dispense with all present idolatrous religions. He will defy and deny God. He will blaspheme Christ and the saints. He will win favor with kings. By diplomacy he will gain their submission. He will be abetted by a False Prophet (very likely Judas), who will work miracles. He will duplicate Divine miraculous works. He will give the world a new religion. The inherent divinity of man will be his doctrine. He will be the visible, corporeal embodiment of that ideal. He will demand and secure universal worship, with the exception of Israel. He will then persecute Israel because a remnant fail in the test of worshiping his image. He defiles the Holy place of God’s temple, with this image of stone given miraculous powers to speak. He will advance arts. He will give the world a socialistic regime. He will be a pro-

nounced pantheist. He will unify labor and commercialize the world. He will reign for a time at Babylon, and the great valley where presumably once was the Garden of Eden, will be the metropolis of the world. He will be a great merchant. He will combine every interest into one. It shall have a mark. To buy or sell, every man will have to bear the seal. He will persecute the woman, the remnant of the people of God, remaining after the rapture. He will wear out the saints of the Most High. He will finally turn his wrath against the Jews. He will summon the nations from east and west to come to this final onslaught. He will take Jerusalem. He will carry one-half of its people into captivity, while the remnant will flee to the mountains, as Jesus warned. Christ shall suddenly descend upon the earth; He will slay the usurper with the breath of His mouth and cast him into the lake of fire; he will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Such is the awful drama of the Man of Sin.

CHAPTER XV.

A VISION OF GOD'S INTERVENTION.

Detailing Several Acts of Divine Interposition; a Presentation of the Lamb and Elect Israel on Mount Zion; the Promulgation of the Everlasting Gospel; the Pronouncement of Doom upon Babylon; the Proclamation of Judgment Against the Beast; and the Separation of the Wheat from the Tares. (Rev. 14.)

This chapter presents a series of Divine interpositions, amid scenes chaotic and indescribable. The preceding chapters, 12 and 13, have revealed the descent of the dragon, and the manifestation of the "man of sin." The lights are lurid, and the shades appalling. The theme has been the great Tribulation. The causes thereof have been detailed in order.

1. The church as a mystic body, called the Man-child, has been translated. Jesus called the righteous "the salt of the earth." There remains little to stem the rising tide of lawlessness and godlessness.

2. The Dragon, as Jesus predicted, has fallen like "lightning from heaven." He declares war on all the saints and destroys them as rapidly as they embrace the Gospel, excepting the Woman hidden in the wilderness, and the elect sealed ones of Israel. These are not identical. Knowing his time is short, he will be incessant, insistent and irresistible in persecution. The three and one-half years of Dragon-Beast dominion will crowd events, the force of which has been accumulating for centuries.

3. The Beast and his confederate prophet, the specially-prepared agents of Satan, have been described and their career graphically portrayed by the Seer in chapter 13.

A survey of the desolation and the bloody havoc wrought is an appalling sight and leads one to inquire, "Hath God forgotten to be kind?" "Is His mercy gone forever?"

Chapter 14 reveals God's intervention amid these turbulent times. Like oases in the desert, are the new scenes introduced into the very midst of all that has been related. We are now to witness what **God has been doing**, while Satan seems to have placed everything good and gracious into eclipse.

Seven distinct acts of Divine intervention shine out like stars, in what has seemed almost a starless night. Truly "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy," although we have ample reason to know "He will not always chide; neither will He keep His anger forever."

The seven Sovereign displays of God's power include:

1. The Presentation of a preserved elect on Mount Zion.
2. The Preaching of the Everlasting Gospel by angels.
3. The Pronouncement of doom upon Babylon.
4. The Prediction of judgment upon the Beast worshippers.
5. The Promise of instant blessing upon those who die in the Lord.
6. The Proclamation concerning the harvest.
7. The Providential gathering of the vintage.

The **first five** fall within the **period of the six Trumpets**. The **remainder** are a brief and a comprehensive view of the **days of the Seventh Trumpet**, the details of which will be disclosed in three succeeding chapters (16-19).

"And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (Verse 1).

The Presentation on Mount Zion.

A comparison of Chapter 7 with Chapter 14 will impress one with the thought of the completeness of prophetic design. These chapters complement each other. They are parallel as regarding Israel's Elect.

We believe there are **two accounts of the same 144,000**. In the first, they are **being sealed** under Divine direction for the purpose of **preservation** in troublous times. This preparation anticipates a stern and trying probation. They were also sealed as a mark of distinction from the worshipers of the Beast. There is no valid reason to regard the sealed company of Chapter 14 as a distinct group from the former.

1. The number agrees. While we do not contend for the exactness of the number, we do claim the **governmental fullness** implied by the use thereof, **a specific number in a representative sense**.

2. Both references bear characteristics of Israel.

3. The Sealed Ones in Chapter 7 are nowhere else accounted for. This omission would be a mark of incompleteness, nowhere else found in the Apocalypse. Every character, or company, elsewhere introduced is accounted for.

4. They are said to be **sealed on their foreheads** in each record.

5. It is further shown that they were kept from the plague of the first Woe, showing their time of service was **cotemporaneous** with the days of dragon persecution (9:4).

6. The **position** in which they appear—**on Mount Zion**. **Mount Zion is Jerusalem**, not the heavenly but the literal—"the joy of the whole earth," as David sang.

We are perfectly aware the Lamb is not appearing on Mount Zion to **reign** in this scene. He does not manifest Himself in that capacity. He is **standing**. This is not a position in keeping with a **regnant** atti-

tude. He comes at the Revelation as the **Son of Man**. Yet He is seen in the vision as **standing on the literal Mount Zion**.

1. In proof of this, John hears a voice **from** heaven. "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Verse 2.)

2. Who are the singers? "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Verse 3).

Evidently the chorus is being sung **in heaven**. The "**harpers**" lead the chorus. The orchestral ranks are not the 144,000. The "**harpers**" are **before the throne** (Jasper throne), and **before the Elders and the "living ones"** (the redeemed church). The 144,000 are on Mount Zion. These **two scenes** of activity are not identical.

The "harpers" evidently **know** the new song. The 144,000 **learn** this song. No one else could **learn** it, save this elect company "**redeemed from the earth.**" "Redeemed from the earth" does not imply a **translation from** the earth. To redeem means to **purchase**. The Revised Version reads, "Who were **bought** from the earth." Moffat's new translation reads, "Who had been **ransomed** from earth." Weymouth renders this clause: "Who had been redeemed out of the world." If we read 1 Pet. 2:21-22 in this connection, the matter clears up wonderfully.

Briefly stated, the sense of the passage is, that Christ separates unto Himself, by virtue of His Sovereign Grace, an elect Israel, who are chosen, because **redeemed**, and they are privileged to **hear and learn** a song **while on earth**, and no man on **earth** can learn that song, save this ransomed host. This song is not as exclusive as some think. The "harpers" are not **angels**; for angels **shout**, but are not said to sing,

neither do they know anything of **redemption**. This heavenly choral company must be the great multitude caught up in the closing days (15:2). An elect Israel **still on earth** takes up the heavenly melody.

But one strong objection will be raised to the view presented. In verse five, it is stated the 144,000 are "without fault **before the throne**." The difficulty is only apparent. "Before the throne" is an interpolation. **The Revised Version omits this** and reads, "They are blameless and in their mouth was found no lie." Weymouth's translation bears this out, thus: "And no lie has ever been found upon their lips; they are faultless." Moffat supports this translation also: "And on their lips no lie was ever detected; they are stainless."

We are thoroughly convinced the **earthly** ministry and character of these elect, while on earth, is portrayed.

1. **Their earthly ministry.** They certainly are called as **witnesses**. Elijah and Moses deal with Israel and turn their people back to God. We do not read of Elijah witnessing of **Christ**. (Read Mal. 4.)

But these elect ones are **Christians**, although of Hebrew extraction. "**They follow the Lamb**."

How are they **converted to Christ**? The answer is by **revelation**. Paul, speaking of his having seen the Lord in resurrection glory, declared, "Last of all He was seen of **me also, as one born out of due time**." The margin reads "born out of due time" as "an abortive"—that is, one of premature birth. Another rendering is "one of untimely birth" (1 Cor. 15:8).

This surely indicates Paul was premature as to his calling and ministry. He belongs to an election of grace outside the usual order of the church period. This special election is purely of Sovereign grace. (Reference has been made to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in an earlier chapter.)

1. Paul was humbled and saved while a persecutor of the church.

2. He was saved by **revelation**.

3. He was made a minister of the Gentiles.

We infer that he is an **earnest**, and properly belongs to the "firstfruits of Israel." If so, we have light upon the calling of the 144,000.

They will be **saved** by a **revelation** of Christ. He stands upon Mount Zion. This does not indicate the world sees Him. Christ has appeared to many in vision in the present times. We do not need to confuse this special revelation of the Lamb to His elect of Israel with His Revelation to the world and other remaining Israelites after the Tribulation at the Epiphany. How else will they be converted?

They will be world-wide preachers of the **Gospel of the Kingdom**. Jesus said, "This Gospel must first be preached as a witness to all nations, then shall the end of the age come." Who will preach it? The mystic body of Christ is removed. Was not Paul sent to the Gentiles? "They follow the Lamb wherever He goes" (Verse 4 W).

What sense can be taken from "following the Lamb," if not in service? If many realized the tremendous wave of gospel preaching before the end of the age comes, there would be less exponents of a new trial for the race after death. The greatest ingathering before the Millennium will come under the ministry of these pious souls.

One fact more. This very chapter reveals angelic messengers following in the wake of these evangelizing hosts. There is no other explanation satisfactory.

2. **Their Spotless Character.** "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Verse 3).

1. **The purity of their lives is attested.** They are undefiled. We are not to infer they will necessarily be celibates. The married state is holy and undefiled (Heb. 13:4). They live in the time of the great harlot, Babylon. They are loyal to Christ, while the world

and many of their brethren in the flesh are worshipping the Beast. "Woman" in a symbolic sense is employed here, as is true all through the Apocalypse. To interpret otherwise is to exclude **women from this company**. We by no means can admit the 144,000 are all males. The spiritual meaning is much more significant. They are kept "unspotted from the world." They are true virgins. Amid gross corruption, open idolatry, and all that is condensed in that dreadful charge against the "harlot women," "having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (17:4), they have been kept undefiled.

2. **Their obedience in life and service** has been shown in a ministry expressed by the unqualified statement, "They follow the Lamb wherever He goes."

3. **They are "firstfruits unto God and the Lamb."** They are not the firstfruits of the church. We, who are sealed, have now the Holy Spirit, as the earnest of our purchased possession. These are a **pledge** of the larger harvest of Israel, when the kingdom shall be set up on earth.

It must be evident they are not the firstfruits of all saints. How can the presence of the harpers and the elders and living ones be accounted for, if this number has the priority in time and place over the harvest of the church? The 144,000 are not yet translated, according to the vision.

4. **In their mouth was found no guile**—"they are blameless." The confession of Christ they make is sincere. The profession is one of true faith. Around them is heard and seen one gigantic lie; yea, the devil's lie is the very manifestation of the age—a **man called God**.

A solemn lesson these faithful and pure souls hold up to the church, which has a higher calling. What our Lord commends in them, He **expects** in us. The next intervention of God is seen in the

Preaching of the Everlasting Gospel.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Verse 6).

An angel—a created being—is the messenger. Paul intimated the possibility of angelic preaching. **"But if even we, or an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"** (Gal. 1:8).

We frankly admit the full import of the "everlasting gospel" we cannot explain, nor have we discovered any positive claim by anyone who feels assured. This much is evident, that in essentials it must harmonize with the gospel that has been proclaimed, otherwise an **"anathema"** would overhang this heaven-sent ministering one.

There is **hope**, also included, for it is gospel. Gospel means **good news**. Weymouth's translation is helpful. **"And I saw another angel flying across the sky, carrying the Good News of the ages."**

It is important to distinguish the **three designations** of the gospel, as to their **dispensational** usages.

The term gospel, all-comprehensively, is ever "good news." The good news, or joyful message, is founded upon the incarnation and atonement of Christ. **Whatever else may be included, the gospel in its very essence is, Jesus Christ hath visited and redeemed us.** It is good tidings of great joy for all people (Luke 2:10).

It was preached in the Old Testament (Heb. 4:2), but **anticipatively**. But the gospel is **progressive** in its unfolding. Jesus said, **"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"** (John 16:12). **The gospel has a dispensational fitness and purpose also.**

1. **The Gospel of the Kingdom** was preached before Jesus taught that the **"Spirit of Truth"** was coming to lead them into all truth. John's witness, in the

Valley of the Jordan, and the commissions of the Twelve and the Seventy, respectively, present the substance of the Gospel of the Kingdom. It embraced a call to repentance, the assurance that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and the promise of the coming of the Christ as a Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, and the warning, "He will thoroughly purge His floor and gather His wheat into the garner" (Matt. 3:11-12). The signs were entrusted as credentials, and as fulfillment of prophecy.

At a glance these facts can be recognized:

1. This is not all of the Gospel.
2. There is not one word about the church.
3. The message was addressed to Israel.
4. There is no hint of the resurrection, nor session in glory, save that, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

5. The calling of the Gentiles is not mentioned.

6. The mystery of the translation of the church is not even implied.

7. The coming of Christ to **harvest the wheat** is to be fulfilled, not in the age of the church, but in the time set forth in Rev. 14.

8. The announcement was that **the Kingdom was at hand**.

2. **The Dispensation of the Gospel of Grace** (Eph. 3:2). Paul declares a **dispensation** of the Gospel was committed unto him. He received this message from God, not man (Gal. 1).

Now, it is a fact, Jesus withdrew the Gospel of the Kingdom, in its Kingdom aspect. That is, the offer of the immediate establishment of His Kingdom on earth was rejected. In consequence, He rejected Israel **for a season**, "until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in," or until He has taken out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name. He did not withdraw the Good News of peace, and pardon, but He did recall the Seventy **before** they covered their com-

plete field of service. They did not finish the tour of all the cities of Israel. Hence, Paul's dispensation points to a Gentile election as a Bride, and the Kingdom conception is temporarily submerged in the **mystery of the Gospel**, which mystery consists in a body of believers being secretly formed, spiritually indwelt by Christ "the hope of glory" and suddenly **taken from earth in a secret rapture**.

This Gospel of Grace is variously termed: (1) Gospel of Christ, because it emanates from the Risen Saviour "anointed at the right hand of God" (Rom. 1:9). (2) The Gospel of the Grace of God (Acts 20:24). (3) It is spoken of as the Mystery of the Gospel (Eph. 6:19), and (4) the Ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:8).

The latter statement presents a further distinction. It indicates the presence of the "paraclete," the Holy Ghost, as Sovereign Administrator in the church, which ministry will close before the manifestation of the "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:6).

The offer of the Gospel of the Kingdom will be resumed after the Rapture, because the coming of the King will be nigh, and Israel once more taken into Divine recognition (Matt. 24:14). It shall be preached among all nations. No doubt the 144,000 will be Christ's elect messengers to proclaim the joyful sound.

3. **The Everlasting Gospel**, in its time application, will be somewhat different. The **eternal** aspects of the Gospel will be emphasized. The former dispensational aspects clearly show (1) the calling of the church with reference to her place of oneness and fellowship in and with Christ in future glory; (2) the hope and calling of Israel and of the nations for a place in the millennial Kingdom.

The everlasting Gospel was designed in eternity. Its eternal effects seem to be the unique feature of the angelic proclamation. The angels accompanying, proclaim a judgment **eternal** upon Babylon and the kingdom of the Beast.

Pronouncement of Babylon's Doom.

Babylon will appear later; being considered of such grave importance, two chapters are devoted by the Holy Spirit to this great city and its mystery. It is almost certain Babylon should be considered from both a civic and religious standpoint. Ancient Babylon was the seat of the Gentile world power. God so appointed it (Dan 2:37).

One of the names by which the Beast is known is "King of Babylon." In his early conquests, he waxes strong "toward the East," so the rebuilding of ancient Babylon is no fanciful dream.

There is also the "mystery." This mystery is to be regarded as a religious system. Jezebel of Thyatira (see comments on Chap. 2) stands for the papacy. The doom of the papacy was to be shared by all the adulterous daughters who committed fornication with her (2:22). They perish together. **The Harlot is older than her daughters.** Therefore, the ultimate goal of the great Apostacy is not the papacy, but the **papacy, paganism, and apostate protestantism** merged into, or rather absorbed by a system of teaching dating from the Tower of Babel. Thus the mother and daughters perish together.

It is the downfall of Babylon the great that is announced here. The actual fulfillment of the prediction takes place during the Seventh Trumpet period. The doom is foretold.

The Predicted Doom of the Worshipers of the Beast.

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name' (Verses 9-12).

The third angel gives warning against worshipping the beast. There is no mercy, hope or repentance for those who receive his mark or bow before his image. Surely the **warning** is a **gracious one**.

72 The punishment of the beast worshipers is enough to make the stoutest heart quake, and sufficient to make the hardest heart break, if it were fully comprehended. All earthly judgments are tempered by mercy, hitherto. This is the cup of unmixed wrath. There is no mingling of mercy; no co-mingling of grace. It is undiluted, concentrated wrath. It is the wrath of outraged love, holiness and justice. Who can fathom the depths of God's heart? It is not the wrath of hate, but the full sense of justice.

X In what does it consist?

1. The condition is **torment**. "Fire and brimstone" are the agents. They may be considered symbolically. If so, the elements are causes of keenest anguish. Read the doom of the great Assyrian (Anti-christ). "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king is it prepared; he hath made it deep and large; **the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it**" (Is. 30:33). Tophet is the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:20).

This is the punishment of the Beast, his worshipers and all whose names are not found written in the book of life, although the wicked dead are not judged until a thousand years later.

2. The judgment is unto **eternal ages**. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever," or, "the ages of the ages." How long does this time expression imply?

The words ages of the ages or aeons of aeons, is applied to—

1. The existence of God (4:9-10; 5:14), etc.
2. The glory of the Lamb (5:13).
3. The doom of Satan (20:10).
4. The reign of the saints (22:5).

By what authority do men limit the time expression when the same words and the same construction form are used in relation to the doom of the beast and the wicked?

5. The torment of the lost (14:11).

We can no more **infer a limit** in the one instance than in any of the others, however much some may **prefer** it.

How solemn the words, "They have no rest day nor night." Truly the fiat of God has gone forth. It is written. What God hath carved on the records of prophecy can never be erased, though man may endeavor to efface it, by hiding it under human sophistries. As surely as time finds the key and applies it to the records of nations written on cuneiform cylinders, in a code thought to be undecipherable, so time will remove the traditions of men and prove that His word can never be changed.

3. And this dreadful doom is in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. Angels beheld the impious, blasphemous defiance of all this doomed horde against God. They now behold the Father vindicated. They will execute the sentence under the direction of the Lamb. The third angel further declares

The Promise of Immediate Blessing for the Dead Who Die in the Lord.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, 'Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them' " (Verses 12-13).

Great comfort has come to saints of all time from these words. It is truly a blessed sleep to repose in Jesus. These words carry a special significance at this time, however.

The judgment session of the saints is a protracted proceeding. The time has now arrived when many that sleep in the dust shall arise. The many who

have suffered martyrdom under the reign of the Beast will now be raised and in glorified bodies, possess a full reward.

The dead "in the Lord" are not raised simultaneously; every man shall rise in his own order.

Frequently, the enthroned and crowned overcomers have been held before us, as the firstfruits reaped at the time of the Bridegroom's appearing. Later, **the great multitude** is viewed standing before the throne. This completed the full ingathering of the early tribulation outcomers. Now is the gleaning time.

73 The resurrection of the righteous dead is **consummated** during the days of the last Trumpet. Please note, the third angel is **announcing** this event. It is accomplished in the "harvest," and the harvest comes **after** the Seventh Trumpet angel sounds. (Compare 11:18).

Some Bible readers and teachers are confused by Paul's statements concerning the resurrections, in 1 Thess. 4:16 and 1 Cor. 15:51-52.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess. 4:16).

"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

The First Statement.

1. This is particular.
2. Christ comes with the trumpet of God.
3. Before the tribulation.

The Second Statement.

1. Is general.
2. An angel sounds the last trumpet.
3. Near the close of the great tribulation.

The trumpets are not identical. Christ comes in Grace. The seventh angel sounds a **judgment** blast. Why is it said that "we" shall be raised, in both in-

stances? In the first, Paul speaks expressly of the resurrection of **saints only**, and they of a class, who are **in Christ** at the moment of the rapture, whether living or dead. In the second reference, he discusses the resurrection of all. (1) Christ—the **firstfruits**; (2) **then, they that are Christ's at His coming**. The time of His coming embraces all that lies between the Rapture and the Revelation, or the time of Christ's coming **for His saints**, and later returning **with His saints**. All must be gathered **before** He comes down to earth. Now, bear this in mind, it is at the last trumpet **ALL** shall have been changed.

In the first reference, Paul says, "**We**" shall be "caught up" and the dead in Christ shall rise first; in the second, he insists, "We shall **ALL** be changed." **A distinction with a great difference**. He then makes mention of the end or consummation of the resurrection, which will consist in the raising of the wicked dead, who have no part in the **first**. This coincides with the delivery of the kingdom to the Father, at the close of Christ's Millennial reign.

The dead in Christ at His appearing are raised; but these do not constitute "**all**" who are brought forth from the grave incorruptible. There will be innumerable multitudes slain **after** the Bridegroom comes. When they are raised, **all** shall have been quickened. The thought evidently is, the last trumpet **consummates** the first resurrection.

There are at **least** two orders, or regiments, in the first resurrection. Of this we are positive. Christ the firstfruits—then they that are Christ's; but there are certainly more than two, as the great multitude in Chapter seven must be resurrected people, and still another in Chapter fourteen.

One further suggestion. What is the mystery Paul speaks of in both passages? It is not the **fact of the resurrection of the righteous**. Daniel speaks of that (Dan. 12:2). The mystery is the **translation of the living**.

The harvest follows the announcement of blessing upon the dead. The time of their entrance into immortality is

The Proclamation Concerning the Harvest.

"And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped" (Verses 14-16).

This section belongs to the **Seventh Trumpet times**. Our comments at present will be few, owing to the many details to be observed later in three entire chapters (16-19).

We approach the harvest three times.

1. The consideration of the six Trumpets led us to the announcement of the Seventh (Chap. 11).

2. The Palin Revelation, or Parenthesis, beginning at the twelfth chapter, closes in the fourteenth at verse 14. **Here**, you observe, we are witnesses of the harvest, a Seventh Trumpet act.

3. Once again, we will reach the consummation. The fifteenth chapter is a prelude, after which the fullest details of the contents of the Seventh, or last Trumpet are disclosed in the seven last plagues.

The harvest is not the **vintage**, but both mark the close of the age.

The Son of man appears. This is the scene actually described in Matthew (25:31): "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." At this time, He separates the wheat from the tares. "The harvest of the earth is ripe." Our Lord had this in mind when He said, "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24:31).

The angels are the reapers. A sickle is a judgment symbol. This is the winnowing time, when He thoroughly purges His threshing floor. The wheat is garnered. Another allusion is the seventh parable of the kingdom: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just" (Matt. 13:47-49).

The harvest is unto mercy and salvation. Yet we cannot but call attention to the sickle, as contrasted with the coming of Jesus for His espoused Bride.

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad. Kings' daughters were among Thy honourable women; upon Thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. . . . She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto Thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace" (Ps. 45:6-9, 14-15).

The Providential Gathering of the Vintage.

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Verses 17-20).

The vintage time under the law, and in nature, follows the harvest. The wheat matures; the fields are

reaped and gleaned, before the fruit of the vine ripens and is gathered for the winepress. The same order is observed in God's dispensational seasons.

X A sickle is the instrument used both to reap the golden grain and cut off the ripe clusters of grapes. But the sickle in the hand of the angel reaper is not the same as in the hand of the gatherer of the fruit of the vine. The latter wields a **sharp sickle**. Both are **instruments of judgment**, but the **first** is **discriminating judgment**. The good is separated **from** the bad. The second is **condemning judgment**. The one is preserved unto mercy and salvation; the other is delivered unto wrath and damnation. To change the figure of speech a little, the wheat is gathered into the garner; the chaff is cast into unquenchable fire. The summary of these two autumn scenes of the age is, "These shall go into the punishment of the ages of the ages; the righteous into the life of the ages" (Matt. 25:46).

X But the **winepress** indicates an **earthly** judgment preceding the doom eternal, foretold by the third angel.

Anti-christ is the "vine of the earth" (Verse 19), including his pernicious system. Jesus is the **true** vine (John 15), and fruitful believers are the abiding branches. The song of this vineyard is sung by Isaiah (5:1-5):

"Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more in my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down."

The **true** vine was, for this reason, substituted. The remnant of Israel will be ingrafted into the true vine. Unbelieving Israel and unrepentant Gentiles will be branches of the vine of the earth. When the clusters of the latter vine are fully ripe, they are gathered in the plains of Esdraelon. There Christ will trample them in His wrath. The winepress is without the city of Jerusalem.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat is where the full wrath of Almighty God breaks forth. This great valley is the **winepress** concerning which Joel remarks, "The press is full." The nations are seduced and rally to this battlefield of doom. This is the place of the "carcass," where the vultures will gather (Luke 17:37). Jesus is presented by Isaiah as the **treader** of the winepress. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? . . . Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment" (Is. 63:1-2).

The slaughter of this incomprehensible host in vastness cannot be estimated by human intelligence. This battlefield is described as 200 miles in extent. Such a measurement must span the whole land of Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba.

Many troops have fallen in battle. The North and South sacrificed 1,000,000 in the War of the Rebellion. Germany offered to the god of war 12,000,000 in thirty years. 20,000,000 fell in the wars of Justinian. But none of these compare with this Waterloo of the ages, when "blood," it is said, "went out of the winepress to the bits of the horses for a thousand, six hundred furlongs."

It is the concentration of rebellious hosts against the Lord and His anointed. Nothing remains to be done

but for heaven's armies to march forth, and, led by One who never lost a battle, overthrow the incorrigible race.

Then the pathetic lament of Jeremiah, so well known but so little understood, will break upon the impenitent souls in awful significance, "**The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.**"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE VISION OF THE SEVENTH TRUMPET.

Ushering in: The Transition of the World's Kingdoms; the Exaltation of Christ as King; the Completion of Judgment; the Consummation of the First Resurrection; the Distribution of Rewards, and the Destruction of Earth's Destroyer. (Rev. 11:15-19; 15 and 16.)

What a series of climaxes the sounding of the last Trumpet evokes—the seven last plagues! **The Mystery of God is finished. The Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is established on earth.** A careful reading of the comprehensive announcement made in Chapter 11 is a sufficient commentary in itself, so far as ascertaining the great issues culminating in this period.

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.’ And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, ‘We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned. And the nations were angry and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.’ And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (Chap. 11:15-19).

This Trumpet peal calls forth Thanksgiving day in heaven. The events this proclamation calls forth are summarized as follows:

1. The transition, or passing, of all the kingdoms of this world into the control of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The exaltation of Christ as King of kings.
3. The completion of the judgment of the nations.
4. The **consummation** of the first resurrection.
5. The distribution of rewards to the saints, who overcame the Beast.
6. The destruction of earth's destroyer.

Chapter fifteen presents a magnificent prelude—a scene in heaven. The harvest briefly sketched in Chapter 14, is manifested in the garner above.

The third series of judgment is about to begin. The “sign” displays seven angels having the seven last plagues; “for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” Before these last administering angels go forth, **another scene** is being enacted in heaven.

The Trumpet, “the last,” has summoned the saints, both the living and the dead, to the throne; **the victors over the Beast**, “which had not worshiped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands.” These constitute the gleanings of the harvest.

Their position is described, as standing on the glassy sea. They have joined the triumphant hosts, which preceded them.

1. The Redeemed church first was unveiled as **seated**, or enthroned, around the Jasper Throne. “Before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal” (Chap. 4).

2. Near the close of the Seal Judgments, a great multitude was translated, and “stood before the throne.” These were tribulation **outcomers**.

3. Here, on the verge of the final expression of wrath against the Beast and his worshipers, are revealed the **overcomers** of the great tribulation; they “stand on the sea of glass.” It is mingled with fire, symbolizing the fiery trial through which they had come.

The ranks of the redeemed are made up. Upon these the Redeemer will look with a satisfaction commensurate with the travail of His soul.

The Tribulation Overcomers

comprise a mixed multitude. They sing a new song.

"And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints'" (Verse 3, Chap. 15).

It is a song of deliverance. We cannot but recall the ancient victory of Israel as paraphrased:

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea;
Jehovah hath triumphed—His people are free."

Complete as was the emancipation led by Moses, and complete as was the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, it was not the ultimate victory God held in store. The wilderness route with its sandstorms, burning heat, trackless wastes; its mirages of elusive hope; its hunger and thirst, does not express the rest that remains for the people of God. The song is not only the song of Moses, but also **of the Lamb**. The meaning is obvious. They celebrate the praises of Him who, as the Captain of their Salvation, has led them into that final rest of which Canaan was a type.

We are not unmindful of the analogy Canaan bears to the believer's **present rest** in the heavenly places in Christ; nevertheless, the land of promise suggests a typical relation to the final deliverance through Jesus, "For it became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).

The overcomers of the tribulation choral the praises of a deliverance, more complete than Moses accomplished, and centre their praises upon the **Deliverer—the Lamb**.

This song further suggests the cosmopolitan (if we may reverently use the word) make-up of the last trophies of redeeming grace before the Millennial Age begins. This company includes the 144,000, who were last seen on Mount Zion, and the recipients of the Gos-

pel, as preached in the trying times out of which they have recently been translated. These Gospel adherents will be taken from Israel and all nations.

The Temple in Heaven Opened

"And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened; and the seven angels came out of the temple, having seen the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled" (Verses 5-8).

The ministers of God's wrath come forth in linen garments, emphasizing the **righteous** character of their mission, although they are not proclaimers of grace.

God's manifestation of Himself in the Holiest of all, has been a gracious display through the ages; He speaks from behind the veil, where the way of approach is made safe through the sprinkled blood.

It is most solemn to contemplate the Holy of Holies from henceforth as the **centre from which judgments proceed.**

The first series, the seals, were opened **at the Throne.** Later, the Trumpet angels proceed with an authority founded upon the intercession of **Christ and the saints.** This scene was laid in the **Sanctuary or Holy Place.**

The third and last series find their source in the Most Holy Place. **God's Holiness** is the basis of the seven last plagues. The result must be a severer course of dealing. Recall the claims of Divine holiness, as the cross expresses judgment without mercy. He Who could not regard the dying cry of His Son, because Jesus took the sinner's place, there demonstrated a holiness that knows no compromise with sin. Love and mercy found a way of escape for the sinner; but holiness exacted fullest expiation on the part of love's Substitute.

Now God's wrath cannot be appeased, since Christ, Whom He gave as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is blasphemed and a fraudulent deceiver receives the homage of the world.

Terrible as the last visitation will be upon the beast, God deals in righteousness, and would impress us so. Who can read these words intelligently and doubt it? "And the temple of God was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power."

"And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, 'Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth'" (Chap. 16, Verse 1).

The Seven Bowls of Wrath

All that was recorded in brief in Chapter 11:16-19 as enacted in heaven, is here detailed in its relation to earth. So many events belonging to the period before the seventh Trumpet needed to be brought into prominence, that the narration of the seven plagues and their effect upon earth was reserved until the sixteenth chapter.

The language is very plain. He that runneth may read. No signs nor symbols are employed.

"And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood" (Verses 2-4).

The sixth plague upon Egypt caused the first real distress upon the persons of the magicians, so that Jannes and Jambres were quite anxious for Moses and Aaron to bring relief (Ex. 9:10-11). This Egyptian plague was a loathsome disease, to which the first plague upon the beast worshippers no doubt bears resemblance.

The second and third plagues are repetitions of Egypt's judgments on a greater scale. These condi-

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tions will overlap each other; the effects extending into the succeeding ones. God will do a **short work** in righteousness.

How forcibly the **retributive** nature of these calamities is brought forward, and the truth of Paul's warning, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

These condemned souls **shed** blood, they must **drink** blood.

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy'" (Verses 5-6).

What a **striking contrast** is presented by the fourth and fifth bowls of wrath. Both are coextensive with civilization, but are opposite extremes. From burning heat and glaring light, the earth is plunged into midnight darkness. The scorching sun, with power unusual for a time, torments the blaspheming race, only to be eclipsed and leave the world in Egyptian darkness, a darkness that can be felt.

Jesus in Gethsemane called His time of lonely wrestling, the "hour of the prince of darkness." Does His "soul exceedingly sorrowful unto death" explain the horrible, crushing oppression, when all who wonder after the Beast, must "gnaw their tongues for pain"?

It is evidently more than an eclipse of the sun. It is the **earnest of eternity's night**. It is "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Verses 8-11).

But, sad to relate, there is no better result than in Pharaoh's day—they harden their hearts and blaspheme God.

The two last plagues embrace the great battle of Armageddon, and the fall of Babylon the great. The preceding judgments aggravate the Beast, and goad him to the mobilization of the armies of the world, and gathering them to battle against Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus (Matt. 13) declared, concerning the wheat and the tares, "Let both grow together until harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers (the reapers are the angels, Matt. 13:39), Gather ye together, first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into My barn."

The tares are bundled. We have witnessed the consolidation of all anti-Christian sentiment of every name and order united in the kingdom of the Beast. We have seen the wheat is garnered. Now the tares will be burned. They will be gathered into the mighty compress—the winepress, to be trodden and then cast into the burning lake of fire. Let us notice the agencies employed in this gathering of the nations for the great day of God.

The Drying of the Euphrates River

The Euphrates River is to be taken **literally**. To assume the "kings of the east" are the ten lost tribes of Israel is an untenable position. Just so is the corresponding assertion that this river signifies the Ottoman Empire.

There is abundance of Scriptural proof that the ten tribes of Israel are **largely absorbed by the two**. A careful reading of these references will show an exodus of many of the ten tribes into Judah; so that Judah became representative of **all the tribes**.

(2 Chron. 30:11) "Divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulon humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." The recognition of **Israel** in Judah can be

found in nearly a score of references (2 Chron. 19:8; 21:2; 21:4; 23:2; 24:5; 28:23; 29:24, etc.). A remnant escaped the Assyrian invasion and became identified with Judah under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30:6-13).

This passage seems conclusive, "The children of Israel and Judah that dwelt in the cities of Judah" (2 Chron. 31:6). No such miracle is necessary as the drying of the Euphrates to bring back Israel. The return of Judah will include a remnant of every tribe.

By "the kings of the east" is meant the kings of the sunrise lands. Great China and other slumbering giants, including Japan now thoroughly awakened, will receive a visitation of Satanic delusion and rally to the last great battle of the beast.

The great river that meanders for 1,800 miles from the snow-capped mountains and empties into the Persian Gulf, has been a military difficulty for ages. Too deep to ford; too long to go around, who cannot appreciate it as a great barrier to military operations?

But if God dries up this river and opens a passage of sufficient magnitude, why does He seem to co-work with this invading host against Israel? That is exactly what Israel reasoned when Pharaoh's army shut them in between the mountains and the sea. But the sequel shows the Red Sea divided, proving a snare and a trap to the Egyptians. God is co-operating with the nations to gather them to battle, for their own destruction. In Zechariah, He says, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (14:1). Accepting the text before us as literal, we are to understand that the invasion of Palestine by armies of myriads, led by their kings, is made possible by a passage made through the channel of the Euphrates by some Providential act.

Three Unclean Spirits

resembling frogs, constitute a second cause of this invasion from the East.

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Verses 13-14).

These loathsome, filthy and disgusting creatures are called "spirits of demons." They, like frogs which are bred in the mire, proceed from the moral wickedness and corruption of the Beast, the Dragon and the False Prophet.

They are sent, by the Dragon of course, on a mission of miraculous manifestations of lure and draw the Eastern nations to war against God. "Well does Satan know his time is short. Signs, wonders, great words and works backed by world power to assist in enforcement, succeed. Just the nature of this doctrine of demons to be promulgated and its method of dissemination at this time, is not revealed. We are not ignorant that Satan has many devices. It is enough to be able to discern them as they come before us. We are assured that men who continue to held a controversy with God will finally be susceptible to **strong delusion**, and will "believe a lie, that they all might be damned." These deceived hosts press their way into the land of Israel. The actual boundaries of the land covenanted to Abraham according to Gen. 15:18 will be "from the river of Egypt" (Nile) to the **Great River Euphrates**.

It is probable the myriads of antagonistic forces arrayed against Israel and the coming Lord, will be gathered more or less over this vast area, with the Nile on the Southwest and the Euphrates on the East. They will be compressed within a battle line of two hundred miles, no doubt rallying closely in one final stand against the anointed of the Lord. The place is called Armageddon; the name is supposed to be taken from the name of the hill Megiddo. It has been thought by some that this will be the **rallying point** and the valley of Jehoshaphat the **Place of slaughter**.

The area of this supreme battle of the ages need not be confined or circumscribed by these geographical hints. The Holy land will be the scene of conflict and these the focal points, but it must be remembered, the extent of this conflict, judging by the destruction predicted, will be very wide, embracing practically the whole land of Palestine.

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Verse 16).

Many battles the Lord has fought for His people on this familiar field. There, Joshua discomfited the hosts of the Canaanites and drove them down the steps of Bethhoron. There, too, Barak inspired by the dauntless Deborah won a celebrated victory, etc., but none compare with this future triumph, when God’s arrows will be sharp in the hearts of the King’s enemies and the Lord God of battles shall fight again, as He fought in the days of old.

The Climacteric Cataclysm

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, ‘It is done.’ And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts and the cities of the nations fell; and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great” (Verses 17-21).

Details as to the fall of Babylon will be found in the next Chapter. This city is especially singled out and its overthrow graphically told by the seer—yet, the same doom falls upon all the earth—“The cities of the nations fell.”

An earthquake under the sixth seal displaced every mountain and island. The severity of this one changes the configuration of the whole earth. "Every island fled, and mountains were not found."

A suggestion as to this mighty change of earth's contour is found in Zech. 14:4-5.

The opening of the Panama Canal was a magnificent triumph of man's engineering skill. It will be a greater display when Christ descends upon Mt. Olivet, and "the mountain shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley."

Jerusalem, in Asia, is an inland city. It is the purpose of God to make it a **seaport city**. It is predicted "in that day living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former (or eastern, marg) sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea" (Zech. 14:8). Now, Jerusalem faces the east, therefore the Dead Sea is the former sea, and the Great or Mediterranean Sea is the hinder.

The details of Scripture are minute, bearing on this topographical change. Six times already, this historic city has been destroyed. The present Jerusalem stands upon the heaps of former ruins. Destruction, too, awaits the Jerusalem of today (Zech. 14:2).

It is after the great earthquake, the modern and redeemed city shall be rebuilt, according to Jeremiah (31:38-40). The configuration of the city site and environment will be changed. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills" (Is. 2:2).

Mt. Moriah, the site of the Mosque of Omar, once the Temple grounds, is not the loftiest hill-top in the city. The great cosmic overthrow attending Christ's advent, will fill up the great valley of the Kedron, thus enlarging and elevating the summit of the mountain of the Lord.

The elements of nature are marshalled to fight against man in his rebellion. The unequalled earth-

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quake is followed by hail, each stone "about the weight of a talent." If the standard of a Jewish talent be used, the weight was 115 pounds for silver. If we may establish the weight of these hailstones, the plague whereof was "**exceeding great**," by this, the destruction of life and property would exceed the most deadly instruments of modern warfare.

There are some whom the **goodness** of God leadeth to repentance. Others, whom the **severity of God** humbles under His all powerful hand.

The work on Calvary, of mercy, grace and love was long ago completed, when our expiring Redeemer with the cry of a victor shouted, "**It is finished.**" The cross is the superlative expression of God's love. This chapter affords the extreme contrast. The seventh angel exclaims, "**It is done.**" In the light of that exhibition of love, we may more clearly interpret the awful significance of this announcement that the wrath of God is finished. The seventh plague calls every power, and resource of the Almighty One into one convulsive earthquake accompanied by a downpour of heaven's artillery, in all an exhibition of wrath no tongue can describe, no pen portray—"It is done."

Oh, that men would harken to God! Calvary's love and the judgment's wrath both fail to move many at last, for they continue to blaspheme to the very end.

Why will men despise the forbearance of God? He is giving space—a reprieve—time to escape the coming wrath. Will we bend the knee; will we confess our sins; will we accept His grace?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VISION OF BABYLON THE GREAT.

A Summary of the Final Manifestation of Counterfeit Religion; the Cruel Domination of the Harlot Mystery; the Just Retribution of the Great Whore; the Modern Restoration of a Commercial City; the Utter Desolation of Babylon the Great (Rev. 17-18).

Babylon presents one of the profoundest mysteries of prophecy. The term is applied to a system and also a city. The designation "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" and her judgment, is to be carefully distinguished from the city of Babylon and its downfall, described in Chapter 18.

"Mystery Babylon" builds a city; the ignominious end of the mystical religious system precedes the destruction of the city. Chapter 17 relates the doom of the Harlot herself, as accomplished by the Beast (Chap. 13) and his supporters, the ten kings.

Chapter 18 foretells the fall of "Babylon, that great city," which becomes the centre of a new system inaugurated by the Beast, after he destroys the woman.

The judgment of the woman on the scarlet beast is to be effected by Anti-christ's world power. The judgment of the city will be subsequently accomplished under decree of the Throne in heaven, and executed by the seventh vial angel.

The first must take place early in the reign of Anti-christ; the second is deferred until the very close of his infamous domination of the world.

Three references are made to the **downfall of the city Babylon**:

The **preannouncement** of this catastrophe is made in Chapter 14 (8), and harmonizes with the seventh and last plague.

The **fulfillment** of this prediction is stated in Chapter 16 (19).

The **full and detailed** record of the above are found, minutely described, in Chapter 18.

The judgment of the "**Great Whore**," therefore, is not the judgment of "**Babylon the great**."

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, 'Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters' (Verse 1, Chapter 17).

The explanatory vision, opening with the above quotation, **does not synchronize** with the days of the Seventh Trumpet, when the seventh vial is poured out. The prophet John, **beheld the fall of the "city" in its final manifestation** (16:19). He is now carried away "in the spirit" into the wilderness, and is instructed by a vision and an interpretation, as to the significance of **Mystic Babylon**.

As the Man-child was accounted for (Chap. 12) by the "sign of a woman" in travail, and we were taken a long way back into history to account for the woman, and found she symbolizes the true Israel of God; so the woman of mystery is presented as having a history of long standing, also. Her antecedents are explained in order to "**show the judgment of the great whore**."

The Sunclothed Woman and the Harlot are rivals. Both lay claim to the same relation to God. The first is true, and brings forth a legitimate offspring—a Man-child, Jesus Christ and His body—the church—together constituting the mystic Christ. The second woman is an adulteress. Professing to represent God

on earth, she has played the harlot with the world. She is also a **mother**; her offspring is designated "Harlots and abominations of the earth."

Comparing these smybotic women, a series of striking antitheses results:

The True Woman

A religious system.
Faithful to God.
Witnesses a good confession.
Gloriously arrayed with the sun.
Upheld by Divine power.
Unveiled in the heavens.
Influential—the moon under her feet.
Exalted in position, above the world.
Celestial wings bear her up.
Wears a crown of twelve stars.
New Jerusalem, the final manifestation.

The Adulterous Woman

A religious system.
Unfaithful to God.
A mere pretence of profession.
Gorgeously dressed in scarlet and gold.
Supported by the Beast.
Exposed in the wilderness.
Popular—applauded by ten kings.
Conspicuously upheld by world power.
Dragon power sustains the harlot.
Bears the name of a destroyer.
Babylon, the ultimate expression.

The systems parallel in times past, but the first will endure forever; the second is destined to a brief triumph and will then perish eternally.

"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Verse 2).

Let us more closely investigate

A System of Ancient Origin

Several statements convey suggestions as to the **Wideness** of her influence, and duration of her queenly sway. She is portrayed as

1. **"Sitting upon many waters."** This is explained by the angelic interpreter in verse 15: "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth are **peoples**, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

The four divisions of the race carry with them the idea of universality. Whoever and whatever the woman may signify, her power is exercised over a vast domain.

The power here is not **political**, but the fascination of an enchantress. **All the kings of the earth**, and the **inhabitants** likewise, have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication (idolatry).

2. Her title indicates that she is older than Pagan or Papal Rome; as "Mother of all abominations," these are merely her progeny. The fact that "in her was found the blood of **prophets**, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," goes far to establish the beginning of her career at a much earlier date than the persecution of the Christian church (18:24).

3. Her **final exhibition**, as seated upon the scarlet colored beast, however, foretells the acquisition of **political** ascendancy, in these latter days—a position suggestive of **control** over the world empire.

What the System Embraces

"Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth."

There are greater and older systems than Rome, systems of religion hoary with antiquity. Papal Rome is one of the daughters; there are others. Babylonianism is the mother and the daughters are many.

Much light has been thrown upon the mysticism of ancient Babylonianism by discoveries, through scientific research at Babylon and Nineveh.

Nimrod instigated the great rebellion after the flood. In the land of Shinar, the foundations of a great tower were laid. The avowed purpose was the consolidation of the race, "Let us make us a name (a sign or token)." The generally accepted reading of Genesis 11:4 interprets the building of the tower of Babel as an attempt to build a stairway to heaven. "May reach" is not in the original text. Is it not more likely the "top" of the tower was a design of the heavens—a spherical dome, marked with the signs of the zodiac, or some similar contrivance setting forth the position of heavenly bodies? Such a stone has been found in Mexico recently, among the Aztec Indians.

This scene in ancient history is more significant than a childish attempt to pierce the heavens with a spire. God came down and confounded their language. Why? Hear God's answer, "And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Gen. 11:6).

Does this not account for the deification of the stars and constellations in heathen mythology?

A Trinity worship was evolved on the basis of family relation, consisting of father, mother and son. The introduction of a feminine member in the Trinity proved a fascination for the race, that can only be accounted for on the ground of Satan's power working in antagonism to the Holy Spirit.

The society formed at Babylon subsequent to the dispersion seems to have received the rudiments of its mystical teaching during the time of Nimrod. At any rate, the records show the promulgation of the doctrine of demons. It becomes a powerful body. Its priests were secretly initiated. The human head of this organization was a priest-king. Gradually the first person of the Trinity was lost sight of. The son and the mother eclipsed the father. Through the succeeding years, the feminine members became alto-

gether prominent. Astarte, Diana, Aphrodite, Venus, Isis and **the virgin Mary**, are some of the designations adopted by different nations and systems.

In the days of the Roman Empire, **Pergamos became the seat of this cult**, its exponents having been banished from Babylon. The title Pontifex Maximus belonging to the priest-king, was conferred upon Augustus Caesar. (See comments Chap. 3) In time the title was applied to the Papacy and acknowledged. Rome has been the **seat of Babylon power** and will remain so, until she effects a consolidation of the ten kingdoms of prophecy, and will, it is probable, transfer the seat of power to the new city, which shall be built on the **plains of Shinar**.

The present war (1914-1915) will do much toward the breaking up of Central and Western Europe. The new centre of the world, commercially and religiously, points to the **great Euphrates valley**.

Let special notice be given to this statement.

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (Verses 3-4).

82 The woman is not the Papacy exclusively, but Apostate Christendom as a whole. Satan will very speedily accomplish the unification of all Christendom after the rapture of the mystic body of Christ. This new development will be the harlot, as she is seen **seated upon the beast**. But the beast is not at this stage of prophecy the Anti-christ. The seven heads and ten horns have no **crowns**. Does this not imply that the woman holds the governmental power?

As has repeatedly been expressed in these pages, the confederation of the Old Roman Empire is to be effected **before** the rise of Anti-christ. We, therefore, behold the **beast** as upholding this universal religion,

a blending of the principles and mysteries of ancient Babylonianism, and also dictating the policy of government.

A great martyrdom shall follow the elevation of the Apostate church to power. Perhaps the sufferers under the altar in Chapter 5 will perish at her hand.

Babylon—the Great

As a **mystery**, we have briefly sketched the adulterous woman. Let us turn our attention to her seat of power—Babylon, a great city.

The Restoration of Babylon From a Human Standpoint

The Scriptures intimate the restoration of **literal** Babylon. Some regard such a theory as mere speculation. But practical men are turning their attention to the great land of Mesopotamia. An irrigation scheme is being actively pushed, which when completed will involve an outlay of \$150,000,000. A great deal of this project is already accomplished. Millions of acres of the finest wheat land in the world will be open for cultivation, when this great undertaking is completed. Germany, England and Turkey are providing the funds.

2. Further, German capital has surveyed a right of way from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf. It is called the Bagdad railway. Construction work has been going on for some time. The war will delay it temporarily.

3. The Great East, like a sleeping giant, is awakening. There is no more suitable place for a world mart than the site of Babylon. With a navigable river for hundreds of miles; the completion of a railroad with a seaport on the Persian Gulf; and the preparation of millions of acres, with an unequalled irrigation system, the world affords no finer commercial project.

The Restoration of Babylon According to the Scripture

In the series of visions accorded Zechariah, there is strong intimation that Satan will transfer the seat of his empire from Rome (where mystically the broken Empire is being held together) to the great Euphrates valley. The visions are as follows:

1. The Lord shows Jerusalem humbled, as the myrtle trees symbolize. But God's providences, as symbolic horses, are seen walking to and fro through the earth to accomplish the restoration of Jerusalem (Zech. 1:8-18).

It is readily granted the primary fulfillment of this and the succeeding visions were realized in the restoration under Joshua and Zerubbabel. But many features indicate a second restoration. For example, the two candlesticks, as have been mentioned with reference to the testimony of the two witnesses (Chap. 11).

2. **Four horns are next revealed** to the prophet and designated as "the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." At a glance, we recognize the four world Empires. Yet, only three of these had appeared at the time of the visions as facts of history. The rising of a fourth indicates the subsequent work of dispersion and persecution under the Roman Empire (Zech. 1:21). Not only as accomplished by Titus centuries ago, but as will be effected in these later years.

3. **The Measuring of Jerusalem** comprises the third vision. The significance whereof is: "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns **without** walls for the multitude of men and cattle that dwell therein, for I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory **in the midst of her**." He is short-sighted, indeed, who finds in the Zerubbabel restoration the fullness of this promise (Zech. 2:1-6).

The voice of the Lord at the time specified cries, "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the **daughter of Babylon**."

4. The cleansing of the people Israel is next shown in the wonderful scene in the Holy of Holies, where Joshua, the high priest, intercedes for Zion, but is resisted by Satan standing on his right hand. The high priest is accused, because of filthy garments, which, according to God's law, are unlawful. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Our Lord Jesus provides suitable apparel and commands those standing near (the living ones) to put a fair mitre upon his brow. Satan is rebuked and Christ's righteousness availeth for Israel's worshipers. After this the two candlesticks are seen burning brightly through the ministry of the two witnesses (Elijah and Moses in the latter days) (Zech. 3 and 4).

5. After this a flying roll passes over the whole earth. Its measurements compare with the size of the floor of the Sanctuary. It is termed a "curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth."

6. Finally we reach the vision bearing unmistakably upon our present discussion.

"Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, 'Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth.' And I said, 'What is it?' And he said, 'This is an ephah that goeth forth.' He said moreover, 'This is their resemblance through all the earth.' And behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead; and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, 'This is wickedness.' And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, 'Whither do these bear the ephah?' And he said unto me, 'To build it an house in the land of Shinar; and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base,' (Zech. 5:5-11).

The "ephah" is the largest of Hebrew measures. It is the symbol of commerce. This ephah going forth signifies "their resemblance in all the earth." That is, the world has adopted lies and false swearing, gen-

erally. **Commercialism** founded upon **dishonesty** will be the climacteric condition of Babylon. Even now Rome's coffers are full. The merchandise in things sacred is but a prophecy of the Apostate church in her last manifestation.

Notice this **ephah** is being carried from the **west** to the **land of Shinar**. "A talent of lead," means a heavy weight. This weight being uplifted, the prophet saw **a woman sitting in the Ephah**. **She** is being carried to Babylon (land of Shinar). The transfer of the **mystery of Babylon** is being made. The ephah is called wickedness. One further fact remains to be noted in this connection. In reply to the question, "Whither do these bear the ephah?" it is said, "**To build it an house in the land of Shinar.**"

The complete fulfillment of these visions, we **await** with interest.

Babylon has never been **destroyed**. There are two small towns on the site of the once greater city. Some thousands of souls dwell within a district which both Isaiah and Jeremiah once predicted should be doomed to **sudden** "overthrow like Sodom and Gomorrah."

The decay of the city Babylon, as it once existed under the first head of the world Empire, was **gradual**, but never complete. How can it be condemned to destruction such as specified in Rev. 18, unless rebuilt? Compare the final judgment of the city of Babylon, as detailed in Revelation, with Isaiah 13:19: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees, excellency, shall be **as when** God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."

Does the disintegration of **ancient** Babylon compare with this?

In brief, these reasons support the claim that Babylon will be rebuilt.

The New Babylonianism

We so designate the remarkable development of this venerable system, which materializes at the time the dragon elevates his **Man of Sin** from the bottomless abyss.

The **Apostate church** all inclusive, transfers the seat of power from Rome to Babylon. The ten kingdoms allied, foster and encourage, while **she** (the Harlot) secretly dictates and governs. This, we infer, is the force of the scene, when the "Mother of earth's abominations," is seated upon the scarlet beast—the **revived Roman Empire**.

"And the angel said unto me, 'Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is'" (Rev. 17:7-8).

This beast is identical with the **first beast** in Rev. 13. **There** the beast came up out of the sea, which emphasized the **temporal power**, and harmonized it with Daniel's fourth beast. **Here**, we witness the rise of the beast from the **bottomless abyss**, forcibly presenting the **Satanic manifestation** in the last exhibition of the kingdom. Seven kings or kingdoms have preceded the development of the world powers before the ascent of the eighth head. The dragon has **seven heads**, so has the beast he possesses and utilizes. These heads signify Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome and the revived or confederated Empire. These comprise seven. We are told in the tenth verse, that the seventh **continues a short time**, and an eighth follows him. The eighth is a man. "**He** is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." But it is also stated the **eighth is the same as the seventh** (11).

What is the solution of this enigma?

1. The revived Roman Empire has no crowns, but a woman dominating. This is the confederation.

2. The Prince of Tyrus deposes three kings and becomes the **seventh head** of the Empire. Up to this time, Babylon the harlot is "in the saddle."

The seventh head is wounded unto death (Chap. 13). In Zech. 11:17, we have the account of his death wound: "The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened."

John sees him as "healed," He was one of the **seven heads** of the beast when wounded; he now is the **beast**—the Empire. He is "the beast that **was**, and is not." "He shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." This certainly proves the seventh world emperor falls and is supernaturally raised from the dead and **reseated** as the **eighth king** and **last head** of the empire.

The Woman's Seat

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (Verses 9-10).

The woman sits upon **seven** mountains (not hills of Rome). These mountains are seven **kingdoms**. The five are fallen—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece. It is also stated "**one is.**" This is Rome past and **revived under the ten kings**, whom the woman dictates. "**And another is to come.**" He is the seventh, of whom we have spoken, the "Coming Prince" as the **seventh head**. This marks the end of the Queen "sitting upon many waters." This prince **continues a short space**, and then dies, as previously told, and goes into **perdition** (Verse 11).

But he **ascends** from the abyss (the deepest depths of Hades) and is now the **beast** (Empire) and its

eighth head. Before his death he was merely the **seventh head.** As the **eighth head,** he is the seventh mountain or king.

As Satan's man, he tolerates the harlot, no, not for a moment. She dictated to him as the **seventh head:** he now dictates to her as the **eighth head** of the universal Empire.

The remainder of the chapter is very simple. We now see the Satanic manifestation of the Roman Empire, the last three and one-half years of Gentile supremacy.

The ten kings are **subordinates,** no longer confederates. They have one mind, and give their strength to the Beast. They make war on the Lamb, as will be fully described in Chapter 19.

The end of the whore comes suddenly with the rise of the beast upon **his ascension from the pit.**

"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Verses 16-17).

It is God's judgment against the Apostate church. He uses these kings and the Anti-christ to accomplish His purpose. Henceforth, the new Babylonianism is in evidence.

The Beast makes Babylon city his commercial centre, profiting by the mercenary example of the woman, and with Satan as his abettor, the system is henceforth **Anti-Christianized,** before it was **professedly Christian.**

Instead of a **pretending** harlot, who called herself the friend of God, we have a new condition. Paganism and idolatry in the name of Christ are stamped out. In their place rises the new universal religion of avowed hostility to Christ. The compromise methods of the harlot to give them a world religion acceptable

has well prepared the nations for Satan's finished product; himself as God, the Beast as Christ, the False Prophet as the Holy Spirit.

Anti-christ's headquarters will be Jerusalem as the religious centre. With commercial Babylon flourishing, his unquenchable ambition is to sit in the temple, which he permitted to be built **before his first death**, and receive the worship of Israel and the whole world. This step proves to be the rock upon which he breaks; yet, three and one-half years, he exercises his murderous policy, and makes the world more drunken than ever with the blood of the saints.

The Judgment of Babylon the Great

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies' " (Verses 1-3, Chap. 18).

The Babylonianism of the past is merged into the new system and as Satan is the spirit working in both, we are not surprised to see his persecutions of the saints wax worse and worse. The last state is a religion literally possessed with demons, "the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

The call is to "come out of her," and corresponds with the announcement in Chapter 14 (8).

The Lament of the Merchantmen.

The vast combine referred to in Chapter 13 finds a sequel here. Babylon city is disclosed as the money market of the earth. Quotations of stocks and bonds will be ticked off from this great exchange over the world.

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The kings of the earth, first standing afar off, sorrow for her, but chiefly for themselves. Their epicurean feasts of delicacies are a thing of the past. Babylon was an extravagant hostess. The spiritual fornications—but who can describe the sensual delights to be introduced by the beast and the false prophet?—are no more.

Next the merchants bewail her fate. Verses 12-13 give an inventory of their stock in trade. "The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron and marble, and cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

Finally the great marine merchants, and all the shipmasters and their employees join the doleful dirge.

"For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like unto this great city!' And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, 'Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate'" (Verses 17-19).

But the heavens rejoice and all that dwell therein.

No words more pathetic, or yet more simple, were ever written than the epitaph of the mighty angel, who by hurling a millstone into the sea enacts as a drama—a tragedy—Babylon's doom.

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall

be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." (Verses 22-23).

God give us ears to hear the warning, and eyes to perceive the drift of modern apostatizing. Even now it is time to harken. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VISION OF THE KING'S TRIUMPH.

Combining, the Joyful Celebration of the Wedding Feast; the Triumphal Procession of the Heavenly Armies; the Glorious Revelation of the Coming King and the Eternal Damnation of the Satanic Confederation. Rev. 19.

Great Babylon is fallen! Gladly we will lift our eyes from these woeful scenes on earth, and open our ears to listen to the glad refrain the heavenly Choir is singing: "**Alleluia: Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God.**"

If it be true, that all musical composers intersperse a few minor strains to emphasize the sweetness of major tones, how excessively thrilling and joyful will be this Alleluia Chorus, after the woeful lamentations of the mourning merchants, kings and seamen, as they chant the requiem of Babylon the great; Alas, Alas—Woe, Woe.

Bible songs are more than melodies—they express thought, sentiment, emotion. What elements enter this jubilant oratorio of Heaven?

1. It is an anthem of full Salvation from sin's guilt, sin's power, and sin's presence. It celebrates the finished work of the cross, and throne, and anticipates the sceptre of peace. It is the triumphant song of a ransomed throng, who have entered the fullness of Redemption.

2. It is a song of victory—of accomplished judgment. There is such a thing as righteous judgment. Those who have fought for a righteous cause can more or less appreciate the pure joy welling up like an irrepressible fountain; not exuberant over its own selfish deliverance so much, as the triumph of a cause so worthy that life has been dedicated on its altar.

3. It is the exultant refrain of **Divine vindication**. The infinitely holy and lovable God, whose long-suffering with millions of an incorrigible race, concerning which race He spake in the long ago, "**For My love, they are my adversaries**" (Ps. 109:4), has been blasphemed and the earth, "the work of His hands," corrupted by the **great whore**. Her condemnation is the **avengement** of the blood of God's faithful servants, and God's **personal** vindication.

The Wedding Anthem.

The volume of this melody increases. The first singers seem to be the martyrs; perhaps those who were slain under the **fifth seal**, who then cried, "How long, O Lord, how long until Thou dost avenge our blood?" (Chap. 6:10.). The Elders and living creatures (the redeemed church) respond from their higher glory—Amen, Alleluia. Finally the command is, "Praise our God, **all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him**, both small and great" (Verse 5).

The transition is very noticeable. The greater multitude sing, not of **judgment**, but acclaim Divine **sovereignty**. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

One has written of his experience listening to the rendering of the Oratorio of the Messiah, with Patti as soprano, Whitney as bass, Theodore Toedt as tenor, and Carey as alto, each supported by hundreds of trained musicians. Just before the "Hallelujah Chorus" there was a death-like stillness over all the throng, and then suddenly the bass singers sang, "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and the alto lifted it a little higher, "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and the tenors, raising it almost to the sky, sang, "For He shall reign forever and ever"; and then the sopranos, as if they were inspired, sang, "King of kings and Lord of lords," and then, as if the angels were there questioning, "How long shall He reign?" with one accord. they made one reply, "Forever and ever, forever and

ever"; and then, as if inspired, the whole choir shouted as with the voice of one man, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

This is a prophecy in miniature of the coming day, when the redeemed church of a godless age, the martyrs of the early judgments, the great multitude of the tribulation and the 144,000 redeemed from among men, and the martyrs of the Beast, shall, with a power born out of the experience of Salvation from sin, confession under trial, and suffering unto death, break forth together, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth' " (Verse 6).

The chorus rises and swells into a grand crescendo, the wedding march. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Verses 7-8).

The Marriage Feast.

"A great supper" is the **incentive** contained in the Gospel call. Often, the Gospel is compared to a feast, but we must be careful to discern the difference between the pardon and peace offered in the Gospel as **present blessing**, and the **future benedictions** of the Gospel, which are compared to a great feast. The feast is reserved for the time predicted, namely, when the nuptials of the Lamb shall be celebrated.

The wedding of the King's Son follows the great judgments, and is held in honor of King Jesus, just before He begins His earthly reign. This is not only confirmed by the setting of the marriage in Rev. 19, but also by Jesus reminding His disciples, "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, **until the Kingdom of God shall come**" (Lu. 22:18). This is a very difficult

problem to deal with for those who affirm that the **church** is the **kingdom**. It is very simple for those who recognize the **kingdom comes during the seventh Trumpet**, as reference will show: "The kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever" (Chap. 11:15).

The wedding banquet will constitute a happy prelude to a glorious reign of a thousand years, in which Jerusalem above, the **bridal city**, becomes the capital city of the Millennial Age, **above** the earthly Jerusalem.

What a glorious contrast the New Jerusalem, radiating its glories, will present to earth's corruption under Babylon the great!

Who Is the Bride?

To answer this question definitely, seems a task upon which none may enter with assured confidence. Opinions are varied, and each dissenting writer can give his reasons for the view he takes.

We shall not assume to **solve** a problem so difficult, but suggest some things that may encourage study and quicken aspiration.

On the first sight, it is a natural conclusion to reach, and affirm, that the Lord's true people, faithful and obedient, will constitute His Bride. A closer view will at least raise doubt as to the absolute correctness of the view.

There is no mention made of a Bride in the parable of the Ten Virgins. The scene points, evidently, beyond the Rapture, but still in advance of the Marriage and the Marriage Supper. We reason thus from the context, Matt. 24:46-51, where it is distinctly stated, "The Lord of that servant shall come in an hour that he looked not for Him"; "**Then,**" or after this, the Kingdom is likened unto "ten virgins that went forth to meet the Bridegroom."

If the intent of our Lord's teaching was to distinguish virgins as a class apart from the Bride, the conclusion is obvious.

The Song of Solomon, the "Divine Love Song," is generally understood as containing mystical reference to the various classes making up the redeemed of this age, as a whole. "My love" among the daughters, "My Spouse," queens, virgins, etc., are referred to.

The forty-fifth Psalm contains a portrait of the King and Queen. He cometh forth from the ivory palaces, "all His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia"—redolent with the perfume of the "anointing of the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The queen is arrayed upon His right hand, in "gold of Ophir." The circle is completed, with attending King's daughters. "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift."

The gracious announcement just before the King's wedding procession begins, seems to imply a distinction between the Bride and the "**Called**" to the Marriage Supper. "Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Did Jesus have this in mind when He said, "Many are called, but few are chosen"? There is sufficient light, at least, to compel us to regard the Bridal estate as very sacred, and a relation worthy of deepest surrender and fullest consecration to our Lord.

It is a high privilege to be **invited** to the Marriage Supper, or, like the wise virgins, to be a companion of the Bride, or friends of the Bridegroom. It is our responsibility to be found in Him. It is His privilege to choose whom He will. Union with Christ, through constant abiding, is a more befitting relation to be found of the Lord than a dissevered branch, whatever may be affirmed of its ultimate position.

WEDDING GARMENTS.

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Verse 8).

This is a fine description of the **Bridal robes**. **Wedding garments** are provided for the guests. There is an

evident distinction between the **adornment** of the Bride and the "best robe" the Father provides for the prodigal. All who are vitally united to Christ are "complete in Him," and must necessarily be "accepted in the beloved." Yet, our **position** in Christ may be far superior to our **state**. Both the Bride and the guests must have Christ's righteousness, as "fine linen, clean and white."

The essential difference must not be overlooked however, between Christ's righteousness accomplished **forever** and the Holy Spirit accomplishing in us what our gracious Lord has made possible for us.

Bridal robes are not works. All is of Grace. But how much of grace does our faith embrace? Do we claim an **imputed** righteousness alone; or, are we yielding to the Holy Spirit that He may **impart** His gift and graces? Is not the prayer of Paul that we might be filled with **all** the fullness of God? Are all the saved ones **keeping** their garments **unspotted** from the world? Are all following on to know the hope of their calling? Are all counting the loss of all things that they may be **found in** Christ, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of God, which is by faith? Did not Christ love the church, and did He not give Himself for it that He may sanctify it, that is, separate it, both **from** sin and **unto Himself**?

Surely, the rich imagery of the Psalm and the "Divine Love Song" are not extravagant descriptions without a positive meaning.

"The King's daughter is all glorious within."

"Her clothing is of wrought gold."

"She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle work."

"So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." (Ps. 45).

Observe the characteristics of the Bride in Songs of Solomon, Chapter 4:

"Thine eyes are as doves behind the veil."

"Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear on Mount Gilead."

"Thy teeth are like ewes."

"Thy lips are like scarlet."

"Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate."

"Thy neck is like a tower," etc.

These figurative expressions indicate: (1) the presence and nature of the Holy Spirit; (2) the visible sign of consecration unto God; (3) the capacity to receive divine truth; (4) the conversation chaste and purged by the blood of Christ; (5) the adornment of a meek and lowly spirit; (6) steadfastness in the strength of God's armor.

But space forbids further comments. There are abundant reasons for recognizing the Bride of Christ from an **experimental standpoint** as well as a **positional**. Whether this thought is acceptable or not, on this admonition all can agree, "Let us walk worthy of our calling." The joy of a bridal soul, who can measure?

"Oh, my heart is full of laughter,
I am very, very glad;
For I've found a precious Treasure,
Such as princes never had.

"Other joys are short and fleeting,
Thou and I can never part;
Thou art altogether lovely,
Ishi, Ishi of my heart."

The Wedding Supper

will be a season of delightful things. We have no light on the nature of the viands spread, nor the formal act of solemnizing the marriage. It is better so. The limitations of earthly comparison only deteriorate from the grandeur and glory of the occasion. The **fellowship** will be sweet. The presence of God's priceless souls; the jewels He has selected through the

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ages, all lost in wonder and adoring praise. The blessed Lord Jesus Himself will serve, so He has promised.

It will be a joyous scene. Christ beautified the marriage at Cana in Galilee with His presence and furnished wine, which proved a surprise to the governor of the feast. The greatest day in Eternity, when the saints are gathered around the great banqueting halls of the celestial world, will bring forth one unanimous exclamation, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now."

Compare this chaste, joyful occasion with the great banquets of earth, and who cannot utter from the depths of his heart, "I want to be there, don't you?"

Heaven Opened.

The portals of heaven opened in Chapter 4, and with the seer, we entered the spacious realms closed hitherto, to man's vision. Once more the doors swing wide, while the heavenly hosts come forth. They are coming; He is coming. This is the revelation, the glorious Epiphany. The Revelation of the Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"Kingdoms at their base are crumbling,
Hark His chariot wheels are rumbling.
Tell, O tell of power abounding
Whilst the seventh trump is sounding."

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Verses 11-16).

"Faithful and True" is His name. There can be no deception nor misunderstanding here. Only One can fill up the measure of this portrait. He comes faithful to His covenant. Did Enoch not see this vision when he exclaimed, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints"? Did Jesus not promise, "As the lightning shineth from the east unto the west, even so must the coming of the Son of man be"? Did He not remind us, "Behold He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him"? **He comes in "glory."** "When the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him" (Matt. 25:31).

Perhaps, the very cloud that accompanied Israel through the wilderness; the cloud that filled the temple—the Shekinah glory; the cloud Ezekiel saw linger after its departure from the Holy of Holies in 598 B. C.; the cloud that received Him out of sight, is the cloud of glory coming back with Him to be established in Jerusalem, for He says, "I, the Lord, will be unto her a well of fire round about and the glory in the midst of her" (Zech. 2:5).

This is the coming of the Son of Man; not the Holy Spirit; not death; not a Christ idea, but the same Jesus as He went away (Acts 1:11). He comes visibly. "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced" (Zech. 12:10), and "every eye shall see Him" (Chap. 1:7).

Behold, Thy King Cometh!

He is coming in power, seated upon a white horse, symbol of righteous and irresistible might. Once He came as a visitor to this world. Queen Victoria received as a present at her coronation a bedstead of carved gold, and a canopy that cost \$750,000, from the Rajah of Cashmere. Jesus lay in a manger; "There was no room for Him in the inn." The crown jewels of England in the Tower of London are valued at \$15,000,000, but the King of the Jews had only a cross for a throne, thorns for His crown, and a reed for His sceptre. It was written of Him, "He is despised and

rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Only one brief day in His earthly life of three and one-half years was He acknowledged and acclaimed a King. The two-fold prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 describes the Triumphal entry of the King of Israel; "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

But the next verse (10) overlaps the centuries and harmonizes with Christ's subsequent entry into Jerusalem, even as we now see Him descending as the "Lord of battles": "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the heathen; and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

X ~~He comes to make war.~~ "And in righteousness He doth judge and make war" (Verse 11).

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2:1-4).

Jerusalem will be desolated three and one-half years. The despotic Anti-christ and his armies shall make a successful conquest of the city near the end of Israel's seventieth week. The armies of the earth are gathered (Zech. 14:2). Why? The above quotation from the Psalms answers. The purpose is more extensive than the destruction of a small remnant of beleaguered Jews! It is the challenge of Satan's man and his international supporters against the **Anointed One, Christ**. What elaborate plans the enemies make to their utter confusion! "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3).

Behold the reinforcements of Israel marching to the fray! The stars fought in their course against Sisera in the first conquest of Canaan; the angel warrior and his heavenly army fought, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Assyrian hosts. The vision of the prophet's servant disclosed the army of Syria, and the Satanic allies behind the scenes. Once again the great Captain of the Lord's hosts come; now all the saints are with him.

✕ **He comes as King.** Heaven acclaimed Him Sovereign when the Jasper throne was set. He has been righteously judging; at last, He descends to earth, and appears as its rightful Lord and Potentate. "**On His head were many crowns.**" On His vesture is written "**King of Kings and Lord of Lords**" (Verse 16). A King He was born, and King He is, as God's Son. He is Royal, the Prince of the House of David.

✕ **As Son of Abraham,** He inherits the promise of God to the father of the faithful—"To thee and to thy seed, will I give this land" (Gen. 12:7).

✕ **As Son of man,** He recovers man's original dominion. **As Son of God,** He is heir of all created things (Heb. 2).

✕ **As the world's Redeemer,** He has paid the ransom of all, and enforces His claim as Emancipator.

✕ **As the Conqueror,** He makes a final conquest. These are His prerogatives to reign. All nations bend the knee. This explains His many diadems.

✕ **He comes in wrath:** This is the day of the Lord's wrath. It was anticipated and feared by the mighty men during the sixth seal. Now they are bold and organized to resist. The hardening nature of sin is demonstrated by defiance, both to love and discipline. **Terrible** is the countenance of the once meek and lowly Lamb of God. "He roars like a lion in His strength!" "His eyes are as a flame of fire." "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Verse 15).

He comes suddenly: As the lightning's flash, cleaving the opening heavens (Matt. 24:27); like the stone Nebuchadnezzar saw **falling** upon the symbolic image of the world powers, breaking it to pieces; and the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold "became like chaff of the summer threshing floor; the wind carried away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35).

Israel fell "on that stone and was broken." Nineteen hundred years of sorrow is the record because they regarded Christ a stumbling block—a rock of offense. "But on whomsoever that stone falleth, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:44).

The coming of the King is not a progressive development. It precipitates a **revolution**. He comes **swiftly**. The kingdom cometh "not with observation," that is, intense **watching** (Greek, parateresis) (Lu. 17:20). All is open, instantaneous, majestic. Go not into the desert to see Him. He will be found where the slain bodies are being devoured by the vultures (Compare Matt. 24:28 W).

He comes literally to earth. "His feet shall stand on that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east" (Zech. 14:4).

He comes by way of **Edom**. "And He **was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood**." "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" "Wherefore art thou **red** in thine apparel and thy garments like Him that treadeth the winefat?" (Is. 63:1).

"I will gather all nations and bring them down into the **valley of Jehoshaphat** and will **plead with them there for My people**" (Joel 3:2). "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of **threshing**" (Joel 3:14 margin).

Jesus Christ will smite the nations on the great plain of Esdraelon (Armageddon). **There**, He treadeth the vintage. There, He threshes the wicked harvest. There, He pleads for Zion, but not with words—"Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword" (Verse 15).

X **He comes with His saints.** They are mounted on symbolic horses of power. They share His authority and constitute His army. He fights; they claim the spoils of victory. This is a repetition of history. The Lord discomfited the confederation of thirty-two kings of Canaan, and Israel followed up the defeated foe. "The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee" (Zech. 14:5).

X **The saints come with Him** by way of the wilderness. "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from seir (in Edom) unto them; He **shined** forth from Mt. Paran and He came with ten thousands of His saints; **from His right hand went forth a fiery law for them**" (Deut. 33:2). Is this not prophecy veiled in a partial historical similitude?

How sweetly the Song of Solomon agrees with this prophecy of Moses: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" (S. S. 3:6).

The **woman** (Israel) is in the land of Moab, and Edom, driven thither by the Dragon. The Lord meets the daughters of Zion **there**. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousal, and in the day of the gladness of his heart" (S. S. 3:11).

Behold Christ's Bride with Him, as the daughters of Zion greet Him. "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?" (S. S. 8:5).

Jesus comes forth from the **Royal Palace** on high:

"Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. And in Thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. . . . Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of

gladness above Thy fellows. All Thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made Thee glad" (Ps. 45:3, 4, 6, 8).

When Jesus entered Jerusalem of old, two companies shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David." "The multitude that went **before**, and that **followed**, cried, saying, . . . Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." This triumphal scene must be repeated. The Lord will appear on Mount Seir with the armies of heaven in His train. The remnant of Israel will **join, apparently**, in the wilderness, and together they march to the conflict of Armageddon.

Afterwards the Conquering Christ, with the two hosts, enters the city and the remnant "not cut off from the city" hear the glad news. "Tell ye the daughters of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee," for "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs of **everlasting** joy upon their heads, . . . and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Is. 35:10).

The Supper of the Great God.

In awful contrast with the joyful marriage feast, with its happy Bride and Bridegroom and the virgins with their gifts, and the victorious march of the conquering King and His armies, it is written:

"I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great'" (Verses 17-18).

The fowls of heaven banquet upon the bodies of the slain. The defeat of Saul on Gilboa's battlefield and the "stripping of the slain" by the Philistines is typical of the great day of God.

Alas, the end of man's day. "Where the carcass is, there shall the vultures be gathered together" (Matt. 24:28 W).

This is the **last war** until after the Lord shall have reigned a thousand years. From henceforth "the nations shall learn war no more."

The Beast was taken (Verse 20). He who defied the armies of the living God is taken. As David lamented the fall of Saul: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen"; so the Lord inspired Ezekiel to "take up a lamentation for the **King of Tyre.**"

The false prophet is also taken alive and together they are cast into the lake of fire, in the presence of their armies.

"And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh" (Verse 21).

So ends the man; so ends the Beast; so ends his deluded followers. All that was **material**, and **imperial**, is consumed into ashes. But **ashes** was not spoken of the **soul**. At the end of the thousand years it is asserted, that the Beast and the False Prophet **are!** (Rev. 20:10).

CHAPTER XIX.

A VISION OF THE KINGDOM.

A Prophecy of Glorious Consummation: The Deposition of Satan from the Earth; Christ's Repossession of the Earth; The Holy City's Manifestation above the Earth, and the Final Insurrection on the Earth. (Rev. 20.)

"Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword!" This startling exclamation Isaiah made (Is. 31:8), just before he uttered the gracious proclamation, "Behold, a king shall reign . . . and princes shall rule in judgment" (Is. 32:1). A welcome exchange and a glorious antithesis! Nature affords beautiful similitudes illustrating the inauguration of the new government upon earth, in contrast with the lawlessness of the Lawless One.

(1) **Night and day.** The age just closing has been a long, dark night. The Prince of Darkness has been ruling; his reign is called the **darkness** of this age. Now, in prophetic vista, "The Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings." "Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning."

"**For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee**" (Is. 60:1-2).

(2) **Winter and spring** are set in contrast. "The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away" (S. S. 2:12-13). Glorious springtime, when the clouds shall not return after the rain!

(3) **Desolation and fruitfulness** portray the transformation period. "They shall lament for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers" (Is. 2:12-13).

This is to be offset by a reclamation of the waste and devastation of drought and war by "the wilderness" becoming "a fruitful field, and the fruitful field" being counted "for a forest" (Is. 32:15).

One by one, the enemies of God and of the church, and of Israel, have succumbed to the unchangeable fiat of God. One more master exhibition of Divine Power completes the task of subjugating usurping enemies to perfect God's design for a reign of peace upon the earth. **It is the binding and imprisonment of Satan.**

The Edenic bliss of the early morning of the present created earth has been so marred by the intrusion of the serpent, it becomes impossible to conjecture the **relief** earth's inhabitants must experience upon **release** from the subtle, seductive and scourging presence of the Tempter.

The most striking antithetical display of all is the **world with Christ**, and the **world without the Devil!** The wisdom of God has a much more effective method in view to make Satan's **exit** a necessity, than man, notwithstanding the discovery that the king of darkness has never existed, save in the **imagination** of a race, which gradually is "finding itself." It is true, some may banish **the thought of Satan** from their **mental** consciousness, but he still remains a potent factor in modern civilized (?) warfare and certain other fields, disclosing pronounced activity. God is continually right. Hear, then, His conclusion of this important matter:

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him

up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Verses 1-3).

The Age-Long Doom of Satan

is the **bottomless pit**. There is an underworld, the abode of departed spirits. It is called **hell** by the English rendering of the Greek word "**hades**." The corresponding Hebrew word is "**sheol**," literally signifying "the unseen state." The use of the term in classical Greek, however mistaken the ancients may have been as to the **nature** of the state of the dead, must be accepted as the actual meaning of the word.

Jacob used "**sheol**" four times. In every instance he had no reference to the **grave**. (See Comments, Chapter 2.)

The Hebrew word for **grave**, a burial place, is "**queber**," used thirty-four times in the Old Testament. "**Sheol**" is used about thirty-one times, and **never** means what our English word "**grave**" indicates. According to the Word, there is "**jealousy**" in "**sheol**" (Cant. 8:6); it also has gates (Is. 38:10), and the souls therein have consciousness. The fall of the Assyrian (the first death) is thus described: "Hell (**sheol**) from **beneath** is **moved** for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth . . . **All they shall speak and say unto thee, 'Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?'**" (Is. 14:9-10).

This same downfall is related in Ezekiel (31:14-16) and is described as going "**down to the pit**," and (in verse 15) as going "**down to the grave**" (**sheol**). "To the pit," and "to the grave" (**sheol**) are synonymous terms. Hence the pit, the bottomless abyss, Hades, Sheol, are identical—with this modification, the "lowest depths of **hades**" is the part of the underworld designated Tartarus, or prison (2 Pet. 2:4), and the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3).

Satan's imprisonment during the thousand years is confinement with the angels in prison, who were consigned to chains of outer darkness. (9)

Be careful to distinguish the lake of fire, Satan's final doom with the Beast at the end of the Millennial Age, from the abyss mentioned here.

The Prince of Tyrus (the coming Anti-christ) is first slain and enters Hades, or the Abyss. After his resurrection, he is slain by Christ and condemned to the lake of fire. }

Satan likewise, is first chained and fettered in the abyss, later to be temporarily released and then eternally tormented in the lake of fire with the Beast and False prophet.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Verse 10).

The Millennium

immediately begins, all avowed enemies having been summarily dealt with. Millennium is not a Scriptural term. It is a Latin compound, designating one thousand. (9)

There are six references in this chapter to a period of one thousand years. They are to be considered literally. The oft-repeated objection, "A day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," is no valid objection at all. The Bible does not say that God regards any day as a thousand years, etc., but He does consider a day—one certain appointed day, as a thousand years. What day? The Day of the Lord, which is in reality a thousand years. Other terms also, describe this Age, commonly known in secular literature as the "golden age." (9)

(1) **Regeneration.** Matt. 19:28. Greek writers used this word to describe springtime, when nature is revived and renovated. The opening chrysalis, the bursting bud, the springing flowers, are heralds of renewed life.

In a theological sense, the word is accommodated to describe the earth, rejuvenated and resuscitated.

(2) **Times of Restitution.** Acts 3:21. The Millennium will, throughout, be a bringing back of earth to Edenic conditions. This will not be effected instantly, but progressively. "The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

(3) **Kingdom.** This is the most frequently used term to describe the "golden age." The Kingdom of God includes all over which God reigns. At present, the Kingdom is in a mystical stage. The Church is a parenthesis, bridging the gap between the first rejection Israel made of the Kingdom, and their acceptance thereof at Christ's Second Coming.

"We Shall Reign Over the Earth."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Verse 4).

The redeemed Church anticipatively sang a song of Salvation and **Sovereignty** in Chapter 5. Daniel predicted that the saints, upon the **final overthrow of the fourth beast**, "shall take the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom forever, even forever and forever" (Dan. 7:18).

The saints are revealed in the chapter before us, as **enthroned** in earthly relation. The distinctive classes of the redeemed are respectively set forth:

(1) **On thrones**; those to whom judgment is committed. Some of these thrones are emphatically mentioned by our Lord. To the disciples, He promised, Ye shall "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lu. 22:30). The rule of **Israel** seems the Divine purpose delegated to the Apostles. There are many other thrones. We have seen the entire elect body in a regnant position around the Jasper throne,

so that it becomes a matter of more than speculation to assert that many "**overcomers**" shall execute judgment over the earth.

(2) **Another order** of the Millennial rulership is suggested after the thrones are designated. The martyrs of the early tribulation are prominently presented: "I saw the souls of them that were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God." These are said to be living and that they "**reigned with Christ.**" This is **associated** governmental authority; a position somewhat different from **delegated** power, as is intimated by "thrones," the reward of the first company of the redeemed.

(3) The conjunction "and" (Verse 4) evidently separates the "souls beheaded" from a third and last company of saints, whose victory over the Beast is specifically noted. Both classes of martyrs share equal honor; "they reign with Christ a thousand years."

In order to intelligently understand the position of the thrones and various heavenly principalities in relation to the coming age, we shall have to defer the explanation until we reach the description of the Bridal city (Rev. 21:9-22). Many have failed to notice that the first nine verses of Chapter 21 describe the **eternal state**, while the remainder of that chapter details the **New Jerusalem**, as, for the most part, it relates to the **Millennial Age**.

The Church and the saints do not reign on the earth; they shall reign over the earth. The glory of the resurrection is both "celestial and terrestrial" (1 Cor. 15).

The centre of government during the thousand years is New Jerusalem, brought down in close proximity to earth. Some saints **may** be rulers over cities and abide here, but it seems **nearer** the truth to consider redeemed Israel as constituting the earthly saints possessing such earthly position, while the **Church and all resurrected saints** occupy a position of "principality and power," such as angels and archangels do in this

age. **This is a higher glory.** A resurrection body would be somewhat **restricted** in its sphere to be confined to a local position on earth.

Jesus will **literally** come upon the earth. We are not bound to conclude that He will be a **constant resident** on earth. The law will proceed from Jerusalem, through the official channels already indicated. The fullest glory of the reign of Christ is lost through the limited view of the Millennium, as purely one of earthly expression. It will rather be the Kingdom of God in its entirety through both spiritual and material mediums.

The higher celestial glory of the Church finds a wide range of expression, when we recognize that the New Jerusalem is near enough to the earth to enhance the glory of the city of Zion, as it will stand rebuilt according to Jeremiah (30).

The Order of the Kingdom.

"I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone out of My mouth, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall **swear**" (allegiance).

Christ's judgments will be strict. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

"My people shall be willing in the **day of My power.**" "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Is. 26:9). Christ will deal severely with the transgressor.

"The **froward heart** shall **depart** from Me; I will not know a **wicked** person."

The slanderer shall be "cut off." A proud look will not be tolerated. The deceitful shall not dwell in the Lord's house. "I will early destroy the wicked from the land." All the wicked doers shall be banished from the city of the Lord (Ps. 101:4-8).

Christ will be very **merciful** to the **righteous**.

"The meek shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).
"Mine eyes shall be upon the **faithful** of the land, that they may dwell with Me" (Ps. 101:6).

The Millennial age will not be a perfect age. There will be a **righteous government**; and **knowledge of righteousness** shall cover the earth. The nations will yield external obedience, and all will be coerced to maintain outward conformity to the equitable rule.

God's Fulfilled Covenant with Israel.

As the earthly people, Israel's sphere will be connected during the Kingdom age with the earth.

(1) **They will present a united people.** The breach Rehoboam caused in the long ago will be healed.

(2) **The descent of Jesus** upon Mount Olivet is followed by a great earthquake, rending the mountains, east and west (Zech. 14:4-10).

In this connection the Dead Sea's lifeless waters will "be healed." "When the late General Gordon visited Palestine, he made a careful study of its singular topography, and then proposed to cut a ship canal from the Mediterranean, across the plains of Esdraelon to the vast chasm through which the Jordan flows, thus raising the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, and the stream between them to the ocean level. This would make Jerusalem a seaport rivaling even Constantinople; for, at the southern end of the Sea of Sodom, there is a deep waddy or canyon through the desert to the eastern arm of the Dead Sea, through which the waters of the two great seas would meet, thus opening up even the old Jerusalem to the commerce of the Eastern world."

But God's plan has anticipated the solution of this problem centuries in advance, and in accord with His own tremendous power (Zech. 14:8).

Ezekiel's vision of the "living waters" will throw much light upon this subject. "These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed."

It is added, "There shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come hither" (Ezek. 48:8-9). This indicates there will be communication between the Great Sea, and the Salt or Dead Sea, especially the subsequent statement of the prophet, "as the fish of the Great Sea, exceeding many."

(3) **A splendid new Temple shall be reared.**

Complete plans and specifications of this unrivaled House of Worship may be found in Ezekiel, chapters 40 to 44, inclusive. Measurements, adornment, are completely set forth. The Lord's entrance and possession are also forcibly foretold. "And he said unto me, Son of Man, the **place of my throne**, and the place of the soles of my feet, where **I will dwell in the midst** of the children of Israel forever."

(4) **All Israel shall be saved.** "Ye shall be called the ministers of our God." "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, 'We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you'" (Zech. 8:23).

(5) **They will be the Chief of Nations.**

In Deut. 28:13, Moses declared, concerning this nation, "The Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail." Isaiah also predicted concerning Israel, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish."

The Hope of the Nations.

Israel, of course, will share in all the temporal blessings. We have reserved the material conditions under the above caption, because the glory of the nations will chiefly consist of these beneficent environings. Although it is true, the people of all countries shall come to "Thy light."

(1) It will be a time of universal peace. One of our Lord's most beautiful names is the Prince of Peace. Against the long ages of conflict, it will be blessed,

indeed, to realize, "**Nations shall learn war no more.**" "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is. 2:4). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy mountain," "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

The Prince of Peace, not the Counsels of Peace, shall bring earth peace. Not The Hague, but Jerusalem, will be the world's tribunal of peace.

(2) **A time of reclamation and fruitfulness.**

The "latter rain" shall be restored to Canaan. "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and increase of the field" (Ez. 36:30). "The desert shall blossom as the rose" (Is. 35:1). "The solitary place shall be made glad." Many physical changes will relieve present conditions. The Dead Sea shall be healed. "The parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water." "Instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree." And this benediction shall be universal. "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (Micah 4:4).

(3) **Human life will be sacredly guarded.**

"The streets of the City shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (Zech. 8:5). This is a strong hint of public safety, under the gracious provision of the new Kingdom.

"And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp; and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' (adder) den" (Is. 11:8).

Brute creation shall be subjected. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Is. 11:6).

(4) **All conditions of life shall be relieved.**

Sickness banished. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Is. 33:24). The curse removed; the exile of Satan; the conformity to righteousness; perhaps flesh-eating abolished; the presence of the Great

Physician; will remove pain and suffering from among the faithful subjects.

(5) Age will be lengthened.

"There shall no more thence be an **infant** of days; nor an **old man** that hath not fulfilled his days; but the sinner being 100 years, shall be accursed" (Is. 65:20).

(6) Righteousness shall follow world-wide evangelization.

"Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. 8:22).

The Resurrection of the Just.

The righteous of all the ages preceding the establishment of Christ's Kingdom on the earth are quickened and glorified.

Most explicit is the Word here on this point: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (Verse 6).

"This is the first resurrection."

It is a holy resurrection.

It is a blessed estate.

It is a quickening unto life.

It is exempt from the second death.

It is a royal exaltation.

It is a priestly elevation.

It precedes the resurrection of the unjust.

"The rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished."

The Last Rebellion.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Verses 7-9).

Between the Millennial and Eternal states, intervenes a brief season, to which but occasional reference is made, and yet crowded with momentous events. As time moves on, the vista of truth widens. Martha's conception of escatology was limited. It amounted to this, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day" (John 11:24).

It is not so very long ago Christian people generally saw ahead the resurrection and the Judgment Day. It was like viewing a landscape at a distance. But with the aid of a lens, mountains, ranges, valleys, are discovered. So students of prophecy searching the Word of God, through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, discern intermediate events.

There are Millennial shadows, notwithstanding the glory of Christ's beneficent reign. Christ's **reign** will be perfect. We must distinguish between a **righteous** reign, and a new earth wherein **dwelleth righteousness**.

Israel shall **all** be saved; that is, all surviving the Tribulation. Many Gentiles "shall come to thy light." Yet it is evident the close will disclose an innumerable host, who have rendered external obedience to the King, but who retained internal objections to His Kingship.

Strange as it may seem, the age of which we speak will have its imperfections. Righteousness will be in power, but as ever has been the case, when conditions are contingent upon man's obedience, man's failure delays the ultimate triumph of righteousness.

What startling proof is this that the carnal mind is enmity against God! No tempter for an age, but the dormant seed conceives, when touched by Satan's hand, upon his release; sin conceived brings forth evil.

Children born in a Kingdom, wherein "Holiness unto the Lord" is even written on the bells of the horses, will eventually revolt. Only those truly born of the Spirit will **in heart** acquiesce to the heavenly rule.

What a commentary upon the discourse of Christ: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." What a lesson to us in this age; teaching the necessity of "being transformed by the renewing of your minds."

Those who fear the Lord, will accordingly press into close proximity to Jerusalem. All that dwell in the land shall be righteous (Is. 60:21). Egypt and Assyria will be in special favor (Is. 19:21-25). Those who consecrate to the Lord will draw near (Zech. 14:21). Consequently, when Satan is loosed from his prison, he will compass the **remote quarters** of the earth (Rev. 20:8).

The identification of Gog and Magog is rather problematical. There is possible allusion to the former northern hosts that during the tribulation swept down on Palestine (Ezek. 38:1-11). They may be remnants of this same foe, or a Scripture parallelism is used to indicate the attack of the foe will be as **formerly**, upon Israel. The opposition is directed against the "Beloved City Jerusalem," and the camp of the saints, the Church of God. If so, the assault is two fold. A physical campaign against Israel, and a war once more in the heavens against the saints.

Gog bears the earmarks of Russia. The names of her provinces are suggestive. It is generally agreed that the name and titles of the Northern King should be rendered "Gog of the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal," and are conceded by Russian etymologists to be roots of the derivations, Russia, Tobolsk and Muscovy.

Will **Syria**, from whence the King of the North cometh, be a dependency of Russia during the Confederation? And will the coming Prince have control of these vast forces? It would seem so. (Read Ezek. 38 and 39).

Whosoever the rebels may be, Satan leads on to the attack. He directs it in person. He trusts no subordinates. He failed through the agency of Anti-christ. Upheld by some vain hope, he infatuates his deceived hordes, and they rally to the standard of the

Black Prince in countless millions, even as the sands of the seashore in multitude. Are they promised a repetition of Calvary? They are goaded to their doom. Fire falls, the contest is quick, sharp, decisive—they are consumed.

The Great White Throne.

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works" (Verses 11-13).

Eternity absorbs time. Time is no more measured, but interminable ages are stretched before one's bewildered gaze. There is time enough for the examination of every secret purpose and intent of the heart, as well as every word and act, which God has declared shall be judged. The millions of earth's unholy dead are here. They have been raised from the dead. From Cain to the last rebel in final overthrow, all are standing before God! Death's seal is broken; the gates of Hades are opened. They give up bodies entombed and spirits imprisoned. In their flesh, the wicked shall see God. How terrible the meeting! That face before which earth and sky flee! This is the final harvest of the dead. It is the second resurrection.

God has declared He will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing. The unsettled accounts of the ages will be investigated; the murderer and his victim, if both are unsaved, will meet face to face. The assembled millions will witness the disclosure of every hidden deed.

Nothing will escape the searching eye of Him who is the Judge. Truth is enthroned and Justice at last is

Sovereign. There is no court of appeal from the decrees rendered; there is no reprieve for the guilty condemned. This is the Supreme Court of Eternity.

Every man shall have an impartial trial. Each shall be tried according to his knowledge. They that are under the law shall perish by the law. They that are without law, shall perish without law, being adjudged responsible for the light within. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for Jerusalem sinners.

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" (Heb. 10:29.)

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

And yet, there is hope for none who have rejected the Son of God.

"The Books Are Opened."

Life's records are indelibly written. The acts and influence of personality are scored upon human hearts, as with a pen of iron. Influence never dies. In this sense, we are **immortal on earth**. We leave more than "footprints" on the sands of time. Our good and evil are an eternal inheritance to our posterity, and leave something to all the circle we touch in our daily journey toward eternity. When will our influence cease? Never until the Judgment. Abel being dead speaketh. His blood has a voice that can be heard by his slayer, forever. Men like Paul departed, are mightier dead than alive. Likewise the evil. Every man carries a Diary of his own life.

Eternity of the Lost.

Before the curtain falls upon the stage, whereon has been enacted the last act in the tragedy of sin, one brief gaze is permitted the sons of men who read the story God has written in love and mingled words of warning. Like the broken heart which takes one last lingering look upon the form reposing in the casket,

the object of its deepest affection, we must tarry here but a moment and whisper a last sad **farewell**.

We do not know where in the vast realm of immensity, called space, is that dreadful abode of the helpless and hopeless. It is enough to know the way home to God and endless rest. But somewhere, there is a place reserved for Satan and his angels. **It was never made for man.** But man who chooses sin in preference to righteousness; Satan in place of God; anti-christian delusion instead of living faith in Christ, must gravitate to the level of his degraded spirit. Love for the good of the race, and deepest regard for holiness, as the preserving law of God and His very throne, can interpose no further barrier. If the cross will not halt the sinner in his way, there remains no further expedient to succor man from the inevitable goal he pursues. Rather than take warning, he prefers to **deny** the very existence of God, or at least the **punishment** reserved for the ungodly.

Nevertheless, let God be true, though every man be a liar.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Verses 14-15).

This is the destiny of Satan, who becomes the victim of his malicious designs upon the race. This is the doom of the Beast and the Prophet, whose infamous defiance of God will deserve such a fate. This is the portion of **all whose names were not found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.**

“Lord, I care not for riches,
Neither silver nor gold;
I would make myself sure of heaven,
I would enter **the fold.**
In the book of **Thy Kingdom,**
With its pages so fair,
Tell me, Jesus, my Saviour,
Is my name written there?”

Blessed Book: the record of all our tiresome journey here on earth.

Blessed Memorial of all the martyrs, yoke fellows and tried ones.

Blessed Register of God's family of true-born sons.

Blessed Record of the unfailing, undying love of Jesus.

CHAPTER XX

THE VISION OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

The Creation of New Heavens and a New Earth of Eternal Duration. The Revelation of the Bridal City in Millennial Relation. The Manifestation of New Jerusalem in an Unchanging Situation. (Rev. 21-22.)

Seven times the scenes of the Revelation alternate between heaven and earth. This accounts for what often seems a retracing of the same ground. This reviewing, however, always introduces new characters and scenes. The last scene is found in Chapter 21 (1-9). It presents **heaven** in relation to earth. It is a **continuation** of the **former chapter**, conducting the reader into the eternal state, and showing what immediately takes place after the White Throne judgment; namely, **new heavens and a new earth**.

But verse 10 introduces a scene which at its **beginning** is **retrospective** and properly is an adjunct of the **marriage of the Lamb**. By omitting all that lies between Chapter 19:7 and 21:9, the connection is perfect. This is a deeply important matter for consideration.

After the King is seen leaving the heavens above, the story proceeds uninterruptedly as it transpires on **earth** through the one thousand years; the rebellion, the last judgment, and eternity, both as concerns the accursed and the blessed. This continuity breaks at the ninth verse of the 21st Chapter, as has been said.

What about heaven during the Millennial Age? If we are not suggesting the arrangement of this Book correctly, then there is absolute silence as to what occurs in heaven all the age Christ's Kingdom flourishes on the earth.

We therefore, are most confident the seventh vial angel now takes John upon a mountain exceeding high, and shows him the city of New Jerusalem, **first** as the **Bridal City in relation to the Millennium**, and then as it consummates **once more in the eternal state**. This is the natural order of procedure through the entire Book.

(1) The story of **earth** is traced to its **consummation**—a **new earth with new heavens**, and the New Jerusalem in eternal relation.

(2) Then at verse 10 (Chapter 21), the **heavenly** contrast is portrayed from the marriage supper (19:7), **through** the Millennium, and on into Eternity. When verse 3 (Chapter 22) is reached, both descriptions **converge**, “And there shall be no more curse,” etc.

The following reasons are urged in support of this interpretation:

(1) **It is the angel** with the **seventh** vial, who was seen in action **before** the one thousand years, who shows the seer the vision commencing at verse 10.

(2) **It is a new vision**. The early part of the Chapter is a continuation of the former vision, beginning in Chapter 19 (11). “I saw heaven opened.”

(3) **This last vision** is viewed from a “great and high mountain.” The Revelator was “in the spirit” at this time, which expression **always** marks a new experience in spiritual rapport (verse 10).

(4) **New Jerusalem** is seen **twice**, **descending** (verses 10 and 2). **This is not a repetition**. These descents are **one thousand years apart**. The **first** takes place at the Coming of Christ, at the **Revelation**, when **heaven is opened**, and is described from the tenth verse (Chap. 21) on; the **second** is effected **after the dissolution** of the present earth.

Therefore, in the one instance the Bridal City relates to the **present earth, before its renewal by fire**; in the other instance, it has relation to the new earth.

In the first case, the city is not said to come **on the earth**, but is seen descending **out of heaven from God** (verse 10) and will remain poised in the air near Old Jerusalem (the earthly city). In the second case, the city and earth are united—and “the **tabernacle of God is with men**” (Verse 3).

A further contrast is plain. The vision beheld from the **mountain** presents the Lamb's wife, and the “Lamb” is prominent. Surely this is reason to accept the setting as Millennial. Notice the reference to the Lamb (10, 14, 23, 27). But when the city is portrayed with reference to the **New Earth** in the **Eternal state**, there is **not one reference to the Lamb. It is God**. His name is spoken of six times (2, 3, 4, 7). Why? Because Jesus reigns as the Lamb for one thousand years; He then delivers the Kingdom to the Father and **God becomes all and in all** (1 Cor. 15:24).

Many other reasons will present themselves if the investigation is carefully pursued.

In connection with the **Millennial** display of the city, Day and Night exist (25). There is no night in the city, but its gates are open with reference to night on the earth.

Kings bring their glory into it (24). Leaves of the tree of life are provided for “the health (medicine) of the nations” (22:2). The nations of the saved walk in the light, or literally, “the nations will live their lives by its light” (23W). Nothing shall enter that is defiling (27). Compare the city in its **Eternal** manifestations:

Night is no more. “The former things are passed away” (Verse 4). **No kings. God is all and in all**. His tabernacle is on the earth (Verse 3). **No sickness**, therefore no leaves of the Tree of Life needed (Verse 4). **Nothing unclean to enter**. All are judged and condemned (Verse 8).

Having, we believe, conclusively shown **two revelations** of the Heavenly city, let us note them in the order **recorded**, and not in the order of time.

The Eternal State.

The program of God for Eternity surpasses His arrangement for the Millenium. The eternal estate is absolutely new.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea" (Verse 1).

What a sequel the Apocalypse presents to the book of Genesis. The closing act in a great drama presents every character, reveals the plot, discloses each detail, and explains all mystery involved. The present creation can only be understood in the finished new creation. The mystery of sin is explained; the glory of Redemption manifested.

IN THE BEGINNING:

Gen. 1:1 Earth was created.
Gen. 1:5 Night divided from the day.

Gen. 1:10 Seas gathered.
Gen. 1:16 Sun established.
Gen. 1:27 First Adam formed.

Gen. 2:22 Woman taken from Adam's side.

Gen. 3:1 Satan entered.
Gen. 3:12 Sin found.
Gen. 3:17 Sorrow conceived.
Gen. 3:17 The curse pronounced.

Gen. 3:24 Tree of Life barred.

Gen. 3:24 Paradise lost.

THE CLOSE WILL WITNESS:

Rev. 21:1 Earth's renewal.
Rev. 22:5 No night.

Rev. 21:1 No more sea.
Rev. 21:23 No need of the sun
Rev. 21:22 The second Adam enthroned.

Rev. 21:2 The Bride of Christ.

Rev. 20:10 Satan's exit.
Rev. 21:8 Sin's banishment.
Rev. 21:4 Sorrow's end.
Rev. 22:3 Curse removed.

Rev. 22:2 Tree of Life accessible.

Rev. 22:1-10 Paradise regained.

Behold, I Make All Things New.

Since the Edenic separation, through the ages, God has steadfastly adhered to one unfaltering purpose, the renewal of fallen creation. Not reformation, but regeneration; not evolution, but revolution and involution; and thank God not destruction, but construction, where His Will is accepted.

A new man, a new spirit, a new heart, a new song, is the work of the Spirit in this dispensation. A new Government, a new people, a new environment and a new Capitol city will be Christ's glorious achievement in the Millennial Age. A New Earth, New Heavens, a new Temple, a new relationship with God, is the glorious work of God in the New Genesis.

Reality a Future Certainty.

Too long has the future home of God's people been spiritualized; so long it is etherealized to many minds; too long, an incorporeal and intangible state in eternity, has been painted on the imagination. Little wonder, a recent novelist expressed through one of his characters, "There is nothing in the Christian's heaven that appeals to me." Had less vague notions of a future state been taught, the **charm** of the eternal home would be more attractive.

God's Word deals not only with verities, but **realities**. Man is more than spirit and ever will be, except for the brief time the spirit is unclothed, between death and resurrection. Job was not mistaken, when he rapturously exclaimed, "Though worms destroy this body, yet in my **flesh** I shall see God."

The dying Bishop, holding up a palsied arm, that was already mortifying, affirmed, "I believe in the immortality of the **body**." **Immortality is never asserted of the spirit.** Only that which is **mortal** can ever become **immortal**. Spirit is eternal, even where immortality is never known.

The Bible presents a Paradise of sense, but widely different from the Moslem dream of sensuality. Jesus spoke of a "place." The New Jerusalem is a city of location and dimensions. A City, Abraham's vision beheld afar, which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. To this City, the Apostle Paul refers: "We have here no continual abiding City, but we **seek one to come.**" (Emphasis should be laid on the word "come.")

It is called New Jerusalem, in apposition to God's earthly City, so dear to Him: It is called the Bride—the Lamb's wife—because the glorified Church will dwell there. This will be the Metropolis of the New Genesis.

The Passing of the Old.

2 The earth shall dissolve; the elements will melt with fervent heat. The atmospheric heavens shall pass away with a great noise. The earth and the things that are therein shall be burned up. From this description of Peter, we are not to contemplate earth's annihilation, but a state very similar to Genesis 1:3. The earth as originally created (Gen. 1:1) became a ("tohu" Hebrew) waste. It was not created "tohu" (waste) (Is. 45:18). The reconstruction of earth is told, from Genesis third verse, to the close of the first chapter. "To pass" does not necessarily involve annihilation, but renovation. As the potter reduces the broken pieces of clay to a plastic mass, fire shall melt and the hand of God remould earth's form. There "shall be no more sea." The purging out of the curse from the ground, and the re-formation of this globe from centre to circumference, will secure against seismic disturbances through the ages of the ages.

Negative Blessings.

"No more death." The last enemy to be destroyed is death. The earth is now, one vast burying ground. A charnel-house of woe. Who hath not felt the touch of its icy finger? where a home unvisited?

Oh! joyful victory, the believer has now in Christ. But thank God, a better state is coming.

No more sorrow. Death's exclusion is sorrow's expulsion. Sin's defeat is sorrow's demise. But there are living sorrows, ghastly, terrible, because they live and live. To be chained to such a body of death is not an occasional woe. Sorrow for children's ingratitude, unfaithfulness of wife or husband, the sorrow of evil report. Earthly existence begins with a wail, and ends

with a groan. Tears of childhood and tears of age, unbidden flow, to swell the rivers, the outlet of earth's heartaches. Tears of pain, tears of grief, tears of repentance, tears of remorse, tears of jealousy, tears of betrayal. Who can enumerate their kind? Who can estimate their number? Perhaps the most bitter tears of all are those scalding tears shed over the lost. All shall be wiped away. The hand of God with a tenderer touch than a mother's gentle hand, shall wipe them away.

No more pain or curse

These woes work together in unison. Pain and the curse were introduced as a resultant cause and effect. Earth rebels against the dominion of man. Thorns and thistles dispute his subjugation of the ground.

While the soil produces the food that sustains life, it also administers the slow poison of death. Vineyards flourish with richly laden branches, whose fruit makes glad the heart of man, yet there lurks beneath, the adder's sting; man is enslaved by the product of the earth. Refining fires shall remove the curse of the ground, and pain's domain shall be no more.

Earth renewed shall belong to a new solar system. The New Jerusalem established **upon the earth**, will not only be the Capitol City and the light thereof, but its very centre of gravity, insuring its perpetual existence.

The Climax of God's Kingdom

is thus presented—a redeemed people dwelling upon the new earth, whose blissful state surpasses Edenic conditions. No serpent to insinuate his lies; no flaming sword barring access to the Tree of Life, for the fruits thereof accessible during the Millennium to the Bride, are **now the delightful portion of the nations**, when heaven is on earth. God is in the midst forever more! He tabernacles among men (verse 3). The pure crystal river of the water of life glides onward forever, from underneath the throne of God, a sweeter source

of the communicated life of God than the living waters proceeding from beneath the altar of the earthly temple in the age closing before Eternity begins.

The New Jerusalem in Millennial Relation.

03 Among the last words of comfort Jesus addressed to His disciples were: "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:2, 3).

While the Bride is making herself ready, the Bridegroom is **preparing** a place—the "house" of "many mansions." On earth, a Bride is ordinarily conducted to her future home after the wedding. The Scripture seems to sustain the same custom. The marriage is celebrated in Chapter 19 (7-9). The Bridal City is unveiled in Chapter 21 (9).

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, 'Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife'" (Rev. 21:9).

This city presents the Bride in her full **governmental glory**. She becomes Queen when united to the King of kings. As a city, the Bride reigns, even as the Mystic Woman was manifested in a city, which as a great metropolis dominated the world. (See our notes on Babylon.)

The city is not the Bride. It is the Bride's **home** and is a literal city, named in her honor. Jerusalem comes down at the beginning of the Millennial Age, and the glorified saints **tabernacle** in the heavens in sight of earth.

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (Verse 10).

The remodeling and enlargement of the earthly Jerusalem must not be confused with the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God. The one will be

fashioned on a temporal and mundane plan; the other will be revealed as a city after the heavenly order of things and **prepared** according to a spiritual pattern. The city above will be visible and accessible to the righteous inhabitants of earth. "The kings shall bring their glories into it" inasmuch as the **nations** of the saved live their lives by the light of the more glorious city.

Notice some comparisons with a degree of contrast:

THE EARTHLY CITY

"Afterward He brought me to the temple (Ez. 41:1).

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East (Ez. 43:2).

"He will fill the latter house with glory."

"Afterward He brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward" (Ez. 47:1).

"It was round about 18,000 measures" (9 miles each side or 36 around") (Ez. 48:35).

"And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel" (Ez. 48:31).

THE HEAVENLY CITY.

"I saw no temple therein" (22).

"The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (2).

"A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb" (22:1).

"He measured the city with the reed 12,000 furlongs (1,500 miles four-square)" (16).

"It had twelve gates . . . and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (12).

The one is a type in miniature of the other.

Some have insisted that the Bride is to be chosen from Israel, because there is mention made of the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes. But attention is directed to the **foundations** of the city.

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Verse 14).

The gates of the upper city correspond with the gates of the lower, showing the relation of the Bridal city to the **earthly kingdom** of Israel. Israel as such, cannot be the Bride. But the city of the Lamb's wife **administers government** over Israel—the angel keepers are ministering servants awaiting commissions to carry judicial decrees from the thrones.

There is no reference to numbers, nor distinct classes in the eternal estate. "All shall reign forever and forever" (22:1-5).

The Heavenly City

poised in view of the nations, yea, **established upon foundations**, briefly claims attention.

Its proportions are startling. It lieth four-square; a perfect cube. Northward, Southward, Eastward, Westward, if we may accommodate the language of our present state. The City extends fifteen hundred miles in every direction. These figures are hard to grasp. If all the great cities of the world, and towns, hamlets, and villages were incorporated within this great metropolis, you could walk hundreds of miles in any direction, and lose sight of them all. The foundation corners, if brought to earth, could rest on Maine, Florida, the head waters of the Mississippi, and the mouth thereof at the Gulf of Mexico.

It must needs be a great city. Perhaps fifteen billions of children are there. The number of the saved is innumerable. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." This Bridal City is but the home, the headquarters of the eternal Kingdom.

There may be worlds at the disposal of the glorified saints. We stagger at the immensity of infinite space. There is a hint of redeemed man's relation to the universe in the Psalmist's question, "When I consider the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, what is man that Thou art mindful of him?" Is he visited by the Redeemer and saved to serve in some capacity in the starry universe, and hereby greatly enhance the glory

of God? It is certain infinite realms and infinite possibilities lie before the dwellers in the New Jerusalem.

A description is found in 21:11-24.

If my foot is to be re-formed from the dust, it must have something to tread on. If my hand is to be re-constructed, it must have something to handle. If my eye is to be rekindled, I must have something to gaze upon. The City of God meets these requirements. Those walls are formidable. All builded of jasper. Jasper is not transparent but many shaded. The foundations are twelve stones, bearing the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and are garnished with all manner of precious stones. The stones are more than suggestive of variety and wealth:

NAME	COLOR	SIGNIFICANCE
Jasper	Crimson	Passion, suffering
Sapphire	Blue	Truth
Chalcedony	White	Purity
Emerald	Green	Hope
Sardonyx	Mixed	Tenderness
Sardius	Blood red	Love and anguish
Chrysolite	Golden green	Glory manifest
Beryl	Serenest blue	Bliss
Topaz	Flame	Joy of the Lord
Chrysoprasus	Azure	Peace
Jacinth	Purple	Future Glory
Amethyst	Purple	Heavenly Glory

Note the order, crimson to blue, white to green, etc.

The twelve Gates are twelve pearls. The pearl is born of suffering. Every gate is opened by virtue of the Lamb's sacrifice. Ornamented gateways are not rare, on great estates. Gates of wood and iron and bronze. Sometimes flanked with lions in statuary; sometimes the posts are twined with foliage. Ancient cities are famous for their gates. Babylon had one hundred. But no such gates are open to the redeemed, and closed against "anything that defileth."

They are not many pearls, but each one great pearl in itself. Caesar, it is said, paid one hundred and twenty-five thousand crowns for one pearl. But very

small it was in comparison with one of these. What a garnishing on the outside! What must it be to be there?

Unequalled illumination. No sun to go down; no moon to eclipse; no stars to fall! There is **no night** there. Unclouded day, serenest light, balmy air, effulgent brightness, refracted glory. The glory of God and the Lamb is the light thereof.

05 **Inexhaustible water supply.** "And He showed me a pure river of water of life, pure as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1).

Earth after all is modeled after heaven. Flowers here fade, flowers there are unfading; trees wither here, trees there are in perpetual bloom, and yield monthly fruit. The river is that which gives beauty to the landscape wherever it flows. Its gentle flow in yonder city means all this and more.

Water is life giving. The water of life will be eternal communication of the life of God.

God has painted a picture of home and rest and beauty and joy. He is adorning it and garnishing it to satisfy the hunger for **home** and **happiness** and **holiness**.

But the purity of that city.

Streets are gold, transparent, no dust, no filth. No moral difilement, which is better far. It is the home of the blood-washed. A new-born soul senses that inner cleansing, when the blood is applied. A deeper consciousness too, when the Holy Spirit comes, and reveals with His light an inward depravity and there is a deeper cleansing. But we still **hear** and **sense** the unholy **voices** and **environment**. We still are the victims of evil suggestions without. But **there**, nothing enters that defiles, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.

This is a prepared home for a prepared people. Its message is obvious. If it is true in that City all are arrayed in white, let us put on our white raiment here; if it is true His servants do always serve Him, let us

learn true service here. If they talk the language of Canaan there, let us master that tongue here. If they sing and shout, let us acquire a spirit of praise here. If all is love over there, let us love one another here. If Jesus is the enthroned Lamb, let us do honor to the Lamb.

Worthy is the Lamb to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honor, and glory, and blessing.

The Conclusion of the Whole Matter.

"And he said unto me, 'These sayings are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to shew unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book' "
(Rev. 22:6-7).

The remainder of this chapter is a grand summary, a practical conclusion. After reading the vision of prophecy, what are the lessons to be learned?

1. The **reliability, authenticity and practicability** of the things written in this vision of the glorious future. They are "faithful and true." They are the words of Jesus—the **events "must shortly come to pass."**

2. The **certainty and imminency** of the Lord's return. "Behold, I come quickly."

3. The **reward and blessing** that follow the keeping of the sayings of this Book, and for faithful service.

"And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me; to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Verses 12-13).

The fullest reward will be conferred when Christ brings us into the Kingdom.

4. The **terms of admission into the City** and the blessedness of its happy citizens.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Verses 14-15).

5. **Jesus—His glorious Person and His relation to the Church and Israel.**

"I, Jesus, have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Verses 16-17).

His claim on Israel is founded upon His royalty. "The Root and Offspring of David." His attitude to the Church is, "I am the bright and Morning Star."

What is the message of the Morning Star? It is evident it is to be interpreted by the analogy suggested. Have you ever seen the Morning Star? He must rise early, who thrills at its first beams. The Star comes trembling, as though with the perils of the darkness, and yet bright with the anticipation of the day. It seems emotional with tenderness, its eyes filled with the tears of many sorrows, for it glimmers and trembles. It is the gem on the hand of the morning thrust up to signal its coming. Other stars shine like candles in the night, or like glistening beads, but this star is glowing with life—it speaks, it sings, not for man's gayer hours—but in the joyless night.

With Greater Joy to the Watchers for His appearing, Christ will rise as the Morning Star before the day of the Lord dawns. Star of Hope for the Overcomers!

6. A solemn admonition against the **neglect, mutilation, or exaggeration** of the sayings of this book.

How solemn to contemplate the many religious teachers who must inherit the plagues of the great tribulation, unless they repent.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Verses 18-19).

7. **The last message of Jesus** expresses the yearning of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit" intercedes with Jesus, "Come." The true longing of the Bride as the Spirit's medium of prayer is, "Come." In view thereof, all the thirsty are invited to come, "and take of the water of life freely" (Verse 17). 10

Yonder river of the water of life is for all the thirsty sons and daughters of the race. The celestial city, as the eternal refuge of weary souls, is wide open. "Who-soever will may come."

8. **The crystalization of character** is the inevitable sequence of time.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Verse 11).

9. **The final word of the Lord Jesus** and the response. "Surely I come quickly" (Amen—Even so). Is John's representative response the echo of your heart? "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." 10

10. **The closing benediction.** "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." How expressive of the heart of Jesus, **Grace.**

"Grace there is my every debt to pay,
Grace to keep me faithful day by day,
Grace to wash my every sin away,
For me, for me."

CHAPTER XXI.

A VISION OF THE OVERCOMERS.

The Distribution of Rewards. The Manifestation of the Sons of God. The Glorification of the Church. The Coronation of the Victors. (Rev. 2-3.)

The **seventh** feature of the seven letters addressed to the churches constitutes a **full reward**, namely, the seven gracious promises our Lord has made to the overcomers. While these inspiring visions of victory had a local application, as had the entire contents of each message to the several churches of Asia respectively; we have the same authority to appropriate the prizes in store **in any period of the history of the church until the "crowning day."**

And in addition to this, having found the spiritual dangers included in our Lord's admonition as possible to any time in church history, it necessarily follows that a **full reward** is possible to any believer in this age, who is more than conqueror through Jesus; for it is Jesus who giveth us the victory.

To ignore the significance of the day of rewards and to indifferently regard what is so prominently mentioned in Scripture as trophies of victory may be a prevailing habit among many Bible readers, but it is a custom to be deprecated rather than condoned. A careful examination of the scores of passages bearing on this question, must inevitably convict the honest heart that some of our views concerning the future sphere of glory need readjusting.

All are saved by **grace**, but the glories of "the sun," "the moon" and "the stars" represent distinctive planes to which the victors are elevated "according to their works."

"One star differeth from another in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:41, 42).

All the rewards involve is impossible to tell. We cannot estimate, much less interpret as yet, eternal values. May the "Spirit of Grace" and "Glory" enlighten the eyes of our understanding "that ye may know what is . . . the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:17, 18).

Love's Reward—the Tree of Life.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Verse 7, Rev. 2).

We cannot but contrast the Edenic forfeit with the future privilege. Sin's barricade of death (a sword) has been defied by the God-Man. Jesus opened the way of return. From henceforth access to the Tree of Life is granted all those who **love** the Lord Jesus Christ. Love verily brings its reward. On the contrary, Paul asserts, "If any man love **not** the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be '**Anathema Maranatha**' (accursed when the Lord comes)." Compare Paul's further assurance; "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me in that day and not to me only, but to all them that **love His appearing**" (2 Tim. 4:8).

The Tree of Life speaks of glorious facts:

(1) **The Bridal City is accessible on "that day."** The "Tree of Life" grows on either side of the river proceeding from the **throne of God and of the Lamb**. It bears twelve manner of **fruits** and yields her fruit every month (22:1, 2). Some have been perplexed concerning the statement "on either side of the river." The "Tree of Life" is a **species**. There will be many trees, but **one genus**.

The triumphant Church enters the city in the days of the Seventh Trumpet—before the Millennium (Rev. 19:7, 11:18).

(2) **Immortality** is a further benediction included under this promise. The "Tree of Life" mystically sustains life forever (Gen. 3:22). The spirit in man is **eternal**. The wicked **live** forever, but are not **immortal**. The righteous alone receive immortality, which is asserted of the body only.

(3) **The "Tree of Life" accessible**, suggests complete restoration of the original glory of the race, and more; the redeemed participate in the fullest glory Christ won in addition to the recovery of man's lost "crown and glory." Man himself, becomes the **guardian** of the Tree of Life, for He that overcomes takes the place of the Cherubim (Chapter 5). Access to the "Tree of Life" displays, as nothing else, the fullness of accomplished **redemption—it is safe for man, henceforth, to eat and live forever**. O life enduring, shameless, sinless, painless! Is it worth while?

The Reward of Trial—A Crown of Life.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Verse 11).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive a crown of life" (Jas. 1:12).

The award awaiting the **tested** saints, whether the test be bodily pain for Christ's sake, or temptations causing mental anguish, is set forth in a strong negative—"not hurt of the second death"—and an equally strong positive—"a crown of life." Adam began to die the very day he sinned, and dying, died a spiritual death—eventually he succumbed physically—but "Dust thou art, to dust returnest" was not spoken of the soul.

Jesus reverses this natural order, through redemption founded on Atonement, whereby He was authorized to say, "He that **loseth his life for My sake, shall find it.**" Death never means cessation of

being, nor **suspension of consciousness**, but rather a condition in which there is no response or "correspondence to environment."

Evidently the "second death" is a state of **suffering**. Exemption therefrom indicates that **redemption complete** recovers the overcomer from the **Edenic** decree and crowns him with "life"—**Life is victor** and "life" as **monarch** is the coronet of regnant man.

Faith's Reward—the Hidden Manna, etc.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Verse 17).

(1) A wilderness type is employed—**The hidden manna**, in contrast with Edenic comparisons drawn in the two former symbols of victory.

The Ark of the Covenant contained a pot of manna to be preserved as a memorial of God's "spreading the table before Israel in the wilderness." As is well known, the manna was a type of Christ the heavenly bread. This "hidden manna" offers a **present** source of supply to meet the spiritual needs of believers. It symbolizes the glorified Christ and His sustenance of spiritual life. "Hidden manna" accounts for the supernatural strength, both spiritual and physical, the child of faith constantly manifests.

But there is a further significance underlying all this, even more suggestive, else it would not be offered as a **reward** for the **overcomer**.

As Melchizedec met Abraham and blessed him on his return from the slaughter of the kings, giving him bread and wine, the Royal High Priest will greet the saints on their return from the warfare on earth, imparting to them the **resurrection and transformation touch of life**. May not the hidden manna, then, pre-

figure the mystic quickening, by which mortality is swallowed up of life? Also the hidden law of the life of the ages of the ages?

(2) **The White Stone and the New Name** have so many classical allusions, a volume might be written on this beautiful figure and it would prove interesting, but possibly miss the mind of the Spirit. The most acceptable interpretation is to be found in reference to the "Urim and Thummim"—the High Priest used in receiving his answers from God. It was also called the "Lights and Perfections of God."

Excellent writers have urged this was a **diamond** bearing the Lord's inscription. There was no diamond in the breast plate. If this be correct, the Lord Jesus will give to him that overcometh in **faith's conflict**, a glittering gem with his own name, like that which the High Priest possessed. It will constitute an authorization to eternal royal prethood, and be the means of knowing the Lord's will at all times.

Reward for Doing Christ's Works—the Morning Star.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Verses 26-28).

The statement "power over the nations" and the metaphor "Morning Star" explain each other. During this age, the Lord Jesus selects a spotless virgin, for whom He will come in the fourth watch of the night (the darkest hour) and appear unto her as the **Morning Star**. Those who anxiously wait for the dawn, will see Jesus in the twilight's first glimmer. The corrupt church and the world itself will miss this harbinger of day. To receive the Morning Star is inevitably the reception of Jesus Himself, as the **realization** of "the hope of glory." Later the Messiah will be manifested to Israel as the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). But in the meantime, the true Church passes the judg-

ment seat inspection and the heavenly government is set in order; each overcomer is established in the celestial sphere—that is—“to him. . . will I give power over the nations.”

Reward for Confession—White Robes.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels” (Verse 5, Chap. 3).

In a generation spiritually cold and lifeless, it requires fortitude and devotion to witness a good confession of Jesus Christ. He will fully **recompense** by an **acknowledgment** before His Father and the angels.

Reference is likely made to the priestly processional following Solomon on his way to the dedication of the New Temple (2 Chron. 5:11, 12). All were **arrayed in white linen**, having cymbals and psalteries and harps.

White raiment, then, portrays a perfected state of holiness, far removed from future taint or corruption. No more will be required a constant vigilance to keep the garment unspotted either from the flesh or the world. No more constant struggle to preserve purity in life and doctrine. Crystalized purity! Priestly worthiness forever more!

Reward for Fidelity—A Pillar in God's Temple.

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name” (Chap. 3:12).

Philadelphia stands unique among the churches, as bearing a special witness to Jesus Christ Himself and His Word.

It is not surprising emphasis is laid upon the Temple of God and the place Philadelphians are destined to occupy therein.

(1) **Pillars.** The age is rapidly approaching its close. The Great Temple the Church will constitute is almost ready for erection. Through the years, the Holy Spirit has been preparing the materials and fashioning them according to the pattern of God. Soon the sound of ax and hammer will cease. The toil and noise of the hewing, chiseling, and fitting, be ended.

After the Rapture, without a sound this glorious Temple shall be reared, and oh what shouts will echo through the Eternal City as happy millions of redeemed acclaim the elevation of the top stone, crying, "Grace, grace unto it!"

Overcomers will be established as **pillars** forming its everlasting solidarity, as well as adorning and beautifying it.

(2) **God's Name.** Allusion already has been made to Christ's "new name." The affixing of God's monogram identifies this Temple and its individual parts, as an everlasting fixture in the **Eternal** estate, as well as the Millennium.

The victor, then, becomes a citizen of the New Jerusalem and shall reign, not alone with Christ a thousand years, but "forever and ever" (22:5).

Reward for Fervency—Enthroned with Jesus.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Verse 21).

The seventh and climacteric reward, which unquestionably falls to the lot of all overcomers, is made the incentive of an appeal to individuals. The Great Head has already anticipated the hopelessness of a general invitation to modern organized Christendom. His heart yearns for isolated souls amid the great apostasy now engulfing the visible Church. A place in His Throne from which He will judge and rule the world for a thousand years is the inspiring pledge offered to those who will receive and let Jesus be regnant within. To crown Christ within is to be publicly crowned by Christ

and wield a sceptre over the nations. Souls long for influence, power, honor—here is our final opportunity for **elevation, exaltation and exultation!**

As a closing word to this humble treatise, we earnestly, lovingly would press upon every heart the tender entreaty of Jesus: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Verse 20).

Surely in the gloaming of the age, this prayer will find its echo in some soul.

"I need Thy presence every passing hour,
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's
power,
Who, like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with
me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away,
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, Who changest not, abide with me!"

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